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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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BY

RAJANI KANTA DAS, M.A., M.SC., Ph.D.

*Director of Rural Survey, Visva-bharati, Former Lecturer in Economics, New York University; Late Special Lecturer on Labor and Population, College of the City of New York, One-time Lecturer in Economics, North-Western University, Chicago; Sometime Special Agent, Department of Labor, United States Government*

The main object of this study is to help in building up the objective background for national thinking on the question of the wealth and welfare of the people. With a very brief description of the nature of production and prosperity, the book discusses historically and statistically the chief resources of the country and the various industries instituted for their utilisation and compares them with those of other advanced countries. The principal industrial products of India, in aggregate and *per capita*, are also discussed and compared with a view to determining the economic condition of the people, both absolute and relative. In conclusion, the present status of national productivity is noted and the fundamental cause of insufficient production indicated.

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# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

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## THE MEANING OF ART.

By RABINDRANATH TAGORE

There is a remarkable verse in the Atharva Veda which attributes all that is great in the human world to superfluity. It says :

**Ritam satyam tapo rashtam sramo dharmascha karmacha,  
Bhûtam bhavishyat ucchiste viryam lakshmirhalam hale.**

*Righteousness, truth, great endeavours, empire, religion, enterprise, heroism and prosperity, the past and the future dwell in the surpassing strength of the surplus.*

The meaning of it is that man expresses himself through his superabundance which largely overlaps his absolute need.

The renowned Vedic commentator, Sāyanācharya, says :

**Yajñe hutasishtasya odanasya sarvajagatkāranabhûta  
Brahmābhedena stutih kriyate.**

*The food offering which is left over after the completion of sacrificial rites is praised because it is symbolical of Brahma, the original source of the universe.*

According to this explanation, Brahma is boundless in his superfluity which inevitably finds its expression in the eternal world process. Here we have the doctrine of the genesis of creation, and therefore of the origin of art. Of all living creatures in the world man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need, which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake. Like Brahma himself, he takes joy in productions that are unnecessary to him, and therefore

representing his extravagance and not his hand-to-mouth penury. The voice that is just enough can speak and cry to the extent needed for every day use, but that which is abundant sings, and in it we find our joy. Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in forms of perfection which are an end in themselves.

All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence. Life is perpetually creative because it contains in itself that surplus which ever overflows the boundaries of the immediate time and space, restlessly pursuing its adventure of expression in the varied forms of self-realisation. Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency, but this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains; it is an image,—its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has colour, shape and movement, most of which belong to the superfluous, that are needed only for self-expression and not for self-preservation.

At the root of all creation there is a paradox, a logical contradiction. Its process is in the perpetual reconciliation of two contrary forces. We have already said that the natural urging of the surplus, the *ucchista*, is the motive force of all that makes for perfection. But the boundless overflow must yield to the bounds of finitude for its manifestation. Truth must become real by the definition of the infinite. We have two contradictory utterances in the Upanishad about the origin of all things. On the one hand, it has been said :

**Anandādhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jayante.**

*The universe has come out of joy.*

On the other hand, there is the verse which says :

**Sa tapo'tapyatah sa tapastaptvā sarvamasrijat yadidam kincha.**

*God made penance, and with the heat generated therefrom he created all that there is.*

The freedom of joy and the restraint of *tapasyā*, both are equally true in the creative expression of Brahma.

This limitation of the unlimited is personality : God is personal where he creates.

**Kavirmanishi paribhûh svayambhûryatatathyato'rthan**

**Vyadadhât shâswatibhyah samâbhyah.**

*Where he dispenses the inner necessities of existence in an accurate measure and for all time he is the poet, the lord of mind, the sovereign power, the self-creator.*

He accepts the limits of his own law and the play goes on which is this world whose reality is in its relation to the Person. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance, in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not in substance or logic, but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to Art.

The world as an art is the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image making. Try to find out the ingredients of the image—they elude you, they never reveal to you the eternal secret of appearance. In your effort to capture life as expressed in living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life, but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of itself through its material. You may call it *Maya* and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great artist, the *Mâyâdevi*, is not hurt. For art is *Maya*, it has no other explanation but that it seems to be what it is. It never tries to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks even its own definition and plays the game of hide and seek through its constant flight in changes.

And thus life, which is an incessant explosion of freedom, finds its metre in a continual falling back in death. Every day is a death, every moment even. If not, there would be an amorphous desert of deathlessness eternally dumb and still. So life is *mâyâ*,—as moralists love to say, it *is* and *is not*. All that we find in it is the rhythm through which it shows itself. Are rocks and minerals any better? Has not science shown us the fact that the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm? The fundamental distinction of gold from mercury lies merely in the difference of rhythm in



their respective atomic constitution, like the distinction of the king from his subject which is not in their different constituents, but in the different metres of their situation and circumstance. There you find behind the scene the Artist, the Magician of rhythm, who imparts an appearance of substance to the unsubstantial.

What is this rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of the artist. So long as words remain in uncaden- ced prose form, they do not give any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of its petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is *máyá*, an image, is lost, its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears to me to be still, but because of its metre of composition it has a lyric of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own. Had the picture consisted of a disharmonious aggregate of colours and lines, it would be dead- ly still.

In perfect rhythm, the art-form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, like a motionless flame that is nothing but movement. A great picture is always speaking, but news from a newspaper, even of some tragic happening, is still-born. Some news may be a mere common- place in the obscurity of a journal; but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine. That is art. It has the magic wand which gives undying reality to all things it touches, and relates them to the personal being in us. We stand before its productions and say: I know you as I know myself, you are real.

Let me repeat here my remark about the function of art from a previous paper of mine: "When we talk of æsthetics in relation to arts we must know that it is not about beauty in its ordinary meaning but in that deeper meaning which a poet has expressed in his utterance: truth is beauty, beauty truth. An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasing to

the eye, and yet we call it perfect when we become deeply conscious of its reality."

Hopeless tragedies of life can never technically be called beautiful, but when appearing on the background of art they delight us because of the convincingness of their reality. It only proves that every object which fully asserts its existence to us because of its inherent finality, is beautiful; it is what is called in Sanscrit *manohara*, the stealer of the mind,—the mind which stands between the knower and the known. We have our primal sympathy for all things that exist, for when realised they stimulate the consciousness of our own existence. The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist.

The *I am* in me realises its own extension, its own infinity whenever it truly realises something else. Unfortunately, owing to our limitations and a thousand and one pre-occupations, a great part of our world, though closely surrounding us, is far away from the lamp-post of our attention, it is dim, it passes by us, a caravan of shadows, like the landscape seen in the night from the window of an illuminated railway compartment: the passenger knows that the outside world exists, that it is important, but for the time being the railway carriage for him is far more significant. If among the innumerable objects in this world there be a few that come under the full illumination of our soul and thus assume reality for us, they constantly cry to our creative mind for a permanent representation. They belong to the same domain as the desire of ours which represents the longing for the permanence of our own self.

I do not mean to say that things to which we are bound by the tie of self-interest have the inspiration of reality: on the contrary, these are eclipsed by the shadow of our own self. The servant is not more real to us than the beloved. The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market price obliterates the ultimate value of reality.

It has been said in the *Vrihad-Aranyaka* :

*The desire for the son does not make him dear, the son is dear for the sake of the self.*

That is to say, in the son the father becomes conscious of a reality which is immediately and profoundly within him. He is delighted not because his son is perfect and beautiful, but because his son is indubitably real to him,—our joy, as I have said before, being the disinterested perception of the real. This is the source of our delight in all arts and literature, where reality is presented to us on the pedestal of its own absolute value.

All the deep impressions in our mind are accompanied by some emotions which set up their own variety of tremors in our consciousness. This agitation modulates our voice and movements and impels us to all creative display of colours, forms and sounds. This reminds me of the occasion when I saw inscribed on the wall of a school building, in exaggerated characters: "Bipin is an egregious ass!" It amused me, and at the same time offered me an answer to the question, *what is art*.

No one takes the least trouble to proclaim the information that Bipin is tall, or that he suffers from a cold. Ordinarily our mind is soberly grey in its impression of Bipin. But when we love him or hate him, the fact of Bipin's existence becomes glowingly evident on the agitated background of passion. Then our mind can no longer remain neutral; it detaches the idea of Bipin from the immense multitude of what is non-significant to us, and according to its own power our mind tries to make him as unavoidably real to others as he is to ourselves.

The boy who angrily longed to give permanence to his indignant estimate of Bipin and make it universally accepted had nothing but his inadequate charcoal and ineffectual training, whereas his forefathers of the primitive age, when excited to anger, not only could give vent to it effectively in action, but also in an expression of gorgeous ferocity by the help of pigments, feathers, tinsel and war dance. That writing on the school wall, craving immortality, sadly begged for colours and rhythmic lines to be like its glorious congeners, the fresco paintings of the world-renowned caves, where the artists attempted to emphasise their estimate of certain personalities, and of sundry incidents, into permanence.

As art creations are emotional representations of facts and

ideas they can never be like the product of a photographic camera which is passively receptive of lights and shadows in all their indiscriminate details. Our scientific mind is unbiassed; it accepts facts with a cold-blooded curiosity that has no preference. The artistic mind is strongly biassed, and that bias not only guides it in its fastidious selection of the subject, but also in that of its details. It throws coloured lights of emphasis on its theme in such a manner that it attains a character which clearly distinguishes it from its fellows. The skylarks of science offer corroboration of their truth through their similarity, the skylarks of artists and poets through their dissimilarity. If Shelley's poem on this bird were just like that of Wordsworth, it should have been rejected for its lack of truth.

As art embodies our personal estimate of a thing, or character, or circumstance, the artist in his work does not follow nature in its capacious heterogeneity, but his own human nature which is selective. By leaving out whatever is non-essential for his own purpose of expression and intensifying what is significant, he brings out the truth of his creation much more vividly than he would if he copied actuality which is strictly impartial to whatever exists. The wholeness of God's creation is immensely vast and it is not possible for any detail to be too defiantly discrepant in its relation to it. But the background of human expression is small and therefore it is never possible to accommodate nature's details in our art compositions. It is childish to expect the primæval forest in the perspective of our garden plot, or an illustration of natural history in our works which modulate fact to the tune of our personality.

Once the question had been asked to me as to the place I assigned to music in my theory of art. I am bound to answer it, and I take this opportunity to offer my explanation.

Music is the most abstract of all arts, as mathematics is in the region of science. In fact, these two have a deep relationship with each other. Mathematics as the logic of number and dimension is the basis of our scientific knowledge. When taken out of its concrete associations with cosmic phenomena and

reduced to symbols it reveals its grand structural majesty, the inevitableness of its own perfect concord. But there is also such a thing as the magic of mathematics which works at the root of all appearances, producing harmony of unity,—the cadence of inter-relation of the parts bringing them under the dominion of the whole. This rhythm of harmony has been extracted from its usual context and exhibited through the medium of sound. And thus the pure essence of expressiveness in existence is offered in music. In sound it finds the least resistance and has a freedom unencumbered by the burden of facts and thoughts. It gives it a power to arouse in us an intense feeling of reality; it seems to lead us into the soul of all things and make us feel the very breath of inspiration flowing from the supreme creative joy.

In the pictorial, plastic and verbal arts the object and our feelings with regard to it are closely associated, like the rose and its perfume. In music the feeling, extracted in sound, becomes itself an independent object. It assumes a tune-form which is definite, but a meaning which is indefinable and yet grips our mind with a sense of absolute truth.

There came a time, centuries ago, in Bengal, when the divine love drama that had its eternal play in human souls was vividly revealed by a personality radiating its intimate realisation of God. The mind of a whole people was stirred by the vision of the world as an instrument through which sounded our invitation to the meeting of bliss. The ineffable mystery of God's love-call taking shape in an endless panorama of colours and forms, finding its chorus in the symphony of human affections, inspired activity in a music that overflowed the restrictions of classical conventionalism. Our *kirtan* music in Bengal came to its being like a star flung up by a burning whirlpool of emotion in the heart of a whole people.

There come in our history occasions when the consciousness of a large multitude becomes suddenly illumined with the recognition of something which rises far above the triviality of daily happenings. Such an occasion there was when the voice

of Buddha reached distant shores across all physical and moral impediments. Then our life and our world found their profound meaning of reality in their relation to the central person who offered us emancipation of love. And men, in order to make this great human experience ever memorable, determined to do the impossible; they made rocks to speak, stones to sing, caves to remember; the cry of joy and hope took immortal forms along hills and deserts, across barren solitudes and populous cities. A gigantic creative endeavour built up its triumph in stupendous carvings, defying obstacles that were overwhelming. Such heroic activity over the greater part of the Eastern continent clearly answers the question: *What is art?*—It is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real.

But the individual mind according to its temperament and training has its own recognition of reality in some of its special aspects. We can see from the Gandhara figures of Buddha that the artistic influence of Greece put its emphasis on the scientific aspect, on anatomical accuracy, while the purely Indian mind dwelt on the symbolic aspect and tried to give expression to the soul of Buddha, never acknowledging the limitations of realism. For the adventurous spirit of the great European sculptor, Rodin, the most significant aspect of reality is the unceasing struggle of the incomplete for its freedom from the fetters of imperfection, whereas before the naturally introspective mind of the Eastern artist the real appears in its ideal form of fulfilment.

Therefore, when we talk of such a fact as Indian Art, it indicates some truth based upon the Indian tradition and temperament. At the same time we must know that there is no such thing as absolute caste restriction in human cultures; they ever have the power to combine and produce new variations, and such combinations have been going on for ages proving the truth of the deep unity of human psychology. It is admitted that in Indian art the Persian element found no obstacles, and there are signs of various other alien influences. China and Japan have no hesitation in acknowledging their debt to India in their artistic and spiritual growth of life. Fortunately for our civilisations all such intermingling happened when professional art critics were not rampant and artists were not constantly nudged by the

warning elbow of classifiers in their choice of inspiration. Our artists were never tiresomely reminded of the obvious fact that they were Indian; and in consequence they had the freedom to be naturally Indian in spite of all the borrowings that they indulged in.

The sign of greatness in great geniuses is their enormous capacity for borrowing, very often without their knowing it; they have unlimited credit in the world market of culture. Only mediocrities are ashamed and afraid of borrowing, for they do not know how to pay back the debt in their own coin. Even the most foolish of critics does not dare blame Shakespeare for what he openly appropriated from outside his own national inheritance. The human soul is proud of its comprehensive sensitiveness; it claims its freedom of entry everywhere when it is fully alive and awake. We congratulate ourselves on the fact, and consider it a sign of our being alive in soul, that European thoughts and literary forms found immediate hospitality in Bengali literature from the very beginning of its contact with our mind. It ushered in a great revolution in the realm of our literary expression.

Enormous changes have taken place, but our Indian soul has survived the shock and has vigorously thriven upon this cataclysm. It only shows that though human mentality, like the earth's atmosphere, has undoubtedly different temperatures in different geographical zones, yet it is not walled up into impassable compartments and the circulation of the common air over the entire globe continues to have its wholesome effect. So let us take heart and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics, laughing at them when in their tender solicitude for our safety they ask our artists to behave like good children and never to cross the threshold of their school-room.

Fearfully trying always to conform to a conventional type is a sign of immaturity. Only in babies is individuality of physiognomy blurred, and therefore personal distinction not strongly marked. Childishness is a mentality that can

easily be generalised : children's babbling has the same sound-tottering everywhere, their toys are very nearly similar. But adult age is difficult of classification, it is composed of individuals who claim recognition of their personal individuality which is shown not only in its own uniqueness of manner but also in its own special response to all stimulations from outside.

I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation carefully to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art according to some old world mannerism. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like branded beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows. Science is impersonal, it has its one aspect which is merely universal and therefore abstract ; but art is personal and, therefore, through it the universal manifests itself in the guise of the individual, physiology expresses itself in physiognomy, philology in literature. Science is a passenger in a railway train of generalisation ; there reasoning minds from all directions come to make their journey together in a similar conveyance. Art is a solitary pedestrian, who walks alone among the multitude, continually assimilating various experiences, unclassifiable and uncatalogued.

There was a time when human races lived in comparative segregation and therefore the art adventurers had their experience within a narrow range of limits deeply-cut grooves of certain common characteristics. But to-day that range has vastly widened, claiming from us a much greater power of receptivity than what we were compelled to cultivate in former ages. If to-day we have a living soul that is sensitive to ideas and to beauty of form, let it prove its capacity by accepting all that is worthy of acceptance, not according to some blind injunction of custom or fashion, but in following one's instinct for eternal value—the instinct which is a God-given gift to all real artists. Even then our art is sure to have a quality which is Indian, but it must be an inner quality and not an artificially fostered formalism, and therefore not be too obtrusively obvious and abnormally self-conscious.

When in the name of Indian art we cultivate with deliberate aggressiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our soul under idiosyncracies unearthed



from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever changing play of life.

Art is not a gorgeous sepulchre immovably brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustment with surprises, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future which is as different from the past as the tree from the seed. Art represents the inexhaustible magnificence of creative spirit; it is generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal; it is unique in its manner and universal in its appeal; it is hospitable to the All because it has the wealth which is its own; its vision is new though its view may be old; it carries its special criterion of excellence within itself and therefore contemptuously refuses to be brow-beaten into conformity with a rhetoric manufactured by those who are not in the secret of the subtle mysteries of creation, who want to simplify through their academic code of law that which is absolutely simple through its spontaneity.

The art ideal of a people may take fixed root in a narrow soil of tradition developing a vegetable character, producing a monotonous type of leaves and flowers in a continuous round of repetitions. Because it is not disturbed by a mind which ever seeks the unattained, and because it is held firm by a habit which piously discourages allurements of all adventures, it is neither helped by the growing life of the people nor does it help to enrich that life. It remains confined to coteries of specialists who nourish it with delicate attention and feel proud of the ancient flavour of its aristocratic exclusiveness. It is not a stream that flows through and fertilises the soil, but a rare wine stored in a dark cellar underground, acquiring a special stimulation through its artificially nurtured, barren antiquity. In exchange for a freedom of movement which is the prerogative of vigorous youth, we may gain a static perfection of senility that has minted its wisdom into hard and rounded maxims. Unfortunately, there are those who believe it an advantage for a child to be able to borrow its grandparents' age and be spared the trouble and risk of growing, and think that it is a sign of wealthy respectability for an artist lazily to cultivate a

monotonously easy success by means of some hoarded patrimony of tradition.

And yet we may go too far if we altogether reject tradition in the cultivation of art, and it is an incomplete statement of truth to say that habits have the sole effect of deadening our mind. The tradition which is helpful is like a channel that helps the current to flow. It is open where the water runs onward, guarding it only where there is danger in deviation. The bee's life in its channel of habit has no opening,—it revolves within a narrow circle of perfection. Man's life has time-honoured institutions which are its organised habits. When these act as enclosures, then the result may be perfect, like a bee-hive of wonderful precision of form, but unsuitable for the mind which has unlimited possibilities of progress.

Before I close my address let me take this opportunity to ask our artists to realise the greatness of their vocation: it is to take a creative part in the festival of life, the festival which is to give expression to the infinite in man. In our everyday world we live in poverty; our resources have to be husbanded with care; our strength becomes exhausted and we come to our God as beggars: On festival days, we display our wealth and say to Him that we are even as He is; and we are not afraid to spend. This is the day when we bring to Him our gift of joy. For we truly meet God, when we come to Him with our offerings and not our wants, and such offerings need Art for its vehicle.

I need have no anxiety about the great world to which I have been born. The sun does not wait to be trimmed by me. But from the early morning all my thoughts are occupied by the little world of my *self*. Its importance is owing to the fact that I have a world given to me which is *mine*, which depends for its perfection on my own creative soul. It is great because I have the power to make it worthy of its relationship with me, it is great, because by its help I can offer my own hospitality to the God of all the world.

In the morning, the sun comes out brightly, in the dusk the stars hold up their lights. But these are not sufficient for us. Until we light our own little lamps, the world of lights in the sky is in vain, and unless we make our own preparations, the wealth of the world preparation remains waiting like a lute for the finger touch. But preparation is going on all the world over, beginning with the age of the cave man down to our time. Man the artist is inviting God the artist to his home. God dwells in his own creation and it is expected of man that he also must create his environment, his own dwelling place, which should be worthy of his soul. For a perfect creation the artist in him must have his freedom, the artist whose one object is perfection and not profit, who has the dignity of pride that despises material success and the heroism that pursues the ideal of inner fulfilment against difficulty, discouragement and privation. And then his world gives a true response to God's world, like the sweetness in woman in answer to the greatness of her lover.

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions.

This world of man's own manufacture with its discordant shrieks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and therefore no ultimate significance. All the great civilisations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources; through a scoffing spirit of denial, of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting YES,—to say : "I believe that there is an ideal hovering over

and permeating the earth, an ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move."

I believe that this vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth, in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing it. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.

# THE DYNAMIC ELEMENT IN INDIAN RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT

By PROF. CARLO FORMICHI.

## II.

Vedic texts repeatedly say that gods are *parokshapriyāh*, namely, that they love mystery, the symbolic, that which cannot be easily grasped. The more obscure a prayer, the more is it likely to please a god. There is, therefore, a kind of emulation among poets as to who will succeed in chanting the praise of a divine being in the most impenetrable way. That the first Indian poets should have ascribed such bad taste to their gods, is certainly a calamity to poor posterity bound to investigate and interpret those poets' compositions, and it is no wonder if European scholars, who have vainly strained their brains to solve the riddle of the Vedic Sphinx, should have gone so far as to compare the odd symbols and the absurd mania for identifying things which utterly differ from one another, with the sad incongruities and insane expressions that are heard in an asylum. One has only to open Schroeder's *Indiens Literature and Cultur in historischer Entwicklung*, at page 112, or Oldenberg's *Weltanschauung der Brahmana-Texte*, at page 2, in order to see that in Europe Vedic symbolism has really been deemed pure madness and, as such, doomed to be studied from the standpoint of psychiatry. Still, we maintain that among the heap of so much dross, the purest gold is to be found.

Let us take, for example, the hymn I, 164, ascribed to Dirghatamas. It contains 52 stanzas, and is dedicated to all the gods. It is overfilled with such impenetrable riddles that the author, namely, Dirghatamas, may rightly be proud of them. If it be true that gods like dark symbols and hate clearness, Dirghatamas could hardly have pleased them better. To give a sample of his odd composition, here is a translation of the first three stanzas :

The middle brother of this amiable hoary *hotar* is the devourer. His third brother has his back smeared with butter. In him I recognized the ancestor who has seven sons.

Seven are those that yoke the one-wheeled cart ; a horse that has got seven names draws it. The wheel on which all beings stand, has three naves, never wears out, is insuperable.

Seven have ascended the cart ; seven horses draw the seven-wheeled cart ; seven sisters cheer it as the one in which the seven names of the cows have been deposited.

Who are the three brothers mentioned in the first stanza ? The eldest one is the old firmament with its sun and stars, namely, the heavenly fire ; the second brother is the atmospheric fire, namely, lightning ; the third brother is the sacrificial fire in which libations of butter are shed. The sun in heaven, lightning in the atmosphere and fire on earth, though apparently three things, are in reality one and the same thing,—nothing but fire. There is a substantial unity in the variety of cosmic phenomena. Our hymn wants to point out the unity of God and from the outset strikes the fundamental note. This is the explanation set forth by Professor Deussen (*Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie* I, I, page 106, 108).

But Professor Geldner, in his recent most valuable translation of the Rigveda, rightly objects : why at all should the lightning be called the devourer ? Such epithet may rather be claimed by the sacrificial fire, which no offerings can ever satiate. The three brothers remind us at once of the *āhavanīya*, *dakshina* and *gārhapatyāgni*. The *dakshināgni* has its place always between the two other fires and receives the greater part of the offerings. This accounts for both the epithets of middle brother and devourer.

In spite of this enlightening interpretation of Professor Geldner, all doubts are far from being removed, for we are at a loss to account for the two epithets *amiable* and *hoary* given to the first fire, and for the description of the third one as having its back all smeared with butter. This description would rather suit the middle fire, namely, the *dakshināgni*, which, as we have seen, receives by far the greater part of the offered ghee. And who are the seven who yoke the one-wheeled cart ? What-ever is the meaning of the horse that has got seven names ? How to solve the riddle of the three-naved wheel ?

Professor Deussen thinks that in the seven we have to see the heavenly *hotars* that yoke the cart of the firmament; in the horse that has got seven names, the sun and the *ādityas*, being in number seven; in the three-naved wheel the firmament again. According to Professor Geldner, on the contrary, the seven are the solar steeds; the horse that has got seven names the seven Harits which sometimes are represented by Etasa alone; the three-naved wheel the symbol of the three seasons.

In the third stanza it is clear that the poet is playing with the number seven, but the discrepancies of opinion among the interpreters are still greater in determining what each group of seven represents.

If we went on examining the philological discussions on the remaining 49 stanzas I am sure I should wear out the patience of my readers, as well as my own.

What is the use of lingering in such a jungle of incongruous symbols? Anyhow, it would be quite unfair to think that only Vedic theologians are to blame on account of their abstruseness. Is the ritual of the Christian religion free from abstruseness? Is not the priest of every religion busy giving a symbolic meaning to every detail of a rite? The wonder is that among the absurdities of the Rigvedic hymn (I, 164) we find sparks of genius and thoughts so deep that we are at a loss to explain how they could be derived from the same brain. In spite of the poet's deliberate intention of concealing his thought in a thick darkness, he cannot help betraying himself, from time to time. The abstruse theologian occasionally, and all of a sudden, transfigures himself into a winged poet, into a clear-sighted seer, only to resume his wonted mask immediately after its momentary lifting.

We read in the fourth stanza :

Who could ever see the First-born, since those that have no bones support those that have them? Where is the vital breath, the blood, the *Self* of the Earth?

Shall we ever find the wise man whom we may question about this mystery?

To say that those who have no bones support those that

have them, simply means that this material world has its prop in a spiritual one, and proceeds from it. Therefore, the First-born, being the offspring not of a living being framed with solid matter, but of a transcendent entity, could by no means be seen by anybody. To speak of the breath, the blood and the Self of Earth, simply means that already in those remote times, the wonderful correspondence between the drop and the ocean, man and the world, the micro and the macrocosm was no longer a secret.

The poet proceeds :

Ignorant as I am I go on questioning those who know, that I may learn who is the One, never born, that propped these six quarters of the universe ?

Our hymn, as I said, is dedicated to all the gods, and it is strange indeed that in it God should be conceived as one. Of this fact only one reason can be given, namely, that polytheism was nearly dying and pantheism was asserting itself more and more. This one God our poet thinks to be now the sun, now father Heaven joined to mother Earth. Overwhelmed with wonder he speaks of the wheel of the universe that turns round without ever wearing out, and of the eye of the sun that finds its way even through the thickest darkness. The sun has *īshas* as his mother, but who is his father? The sun has got no father. Here is another mystery that announces God's spirit. Seasons go and then come back again; days, likewise, die and are born anew; and why this is so, we know not. He who does not know the Father will never eat of the sweet berry that is at the top of the tree of wisdom, whereon all birds build their nests and brood over their eggs :

*Yasmin vrikshē madhradah suparnā nvisante suvate chddhi visve,  
Tasyedahuh pippalam svadvagre launonnacadyah pitaram na veda.*  
I, 164, 22.

God is one, God is the Father! What more can we ask from the Rigveda? The poet, like an eagle, has flown up to the highest region, but see how he hastens back to the morass in telling us that the Creator availed himself of the *jagāt* metre in



order to dam the heavenly river, and discovered the sun and the *rathantara* melody.

Again he soars into the heights when he says : Though life, breathing, lies motionless still swiftly it goes among the rivers. The soul of the dead man wanders wherever it likes : what is immortal has got the same womb as that which is mortal :

*Anacchaye turnagatu jivam ejād dhruvam madhya ā pastyānām,  
Jivomrtasya charati svadhabhir amarīya marīye na saynoih. 1,164,30.*

Thanks to Professor Geldner's philological acumen we are now able to understand the meaning of this and of the two other following stanzas. *Though life, breathing, lies motionless, still swiftly it goes among the rivers*, namely, the body of a sleeping man lies motionless and differs from a corpse only because it breathes, but his soul swiftly wanders everywhere as soon as he begins to dream. The dream reveals the independence of the soul, for this latter may leave the motionless body and go wherever it likes. On the contrary, the body is moving while the body is awake, and the soul still lies among the blood, the lymph and the other humours of the body, which like rivers flow through it. The miracle of the soul leaving the body and going wherever it likes in the state of dreaming, leads to the belief in the similar miracle of the soul leaving the body in death and going wherever it likes. This body is mortal but it is the abode of the immortal soul : body and soul have only one womb.

Was not the spirit of the Upanishads hovering over Dirghatamas while he composed this and the two other stanzas which run thus :

I have seen the shepherd going his way here and there without ever becoming weary. Clad in the waters flowing in the same and different directions, he wanders in the interior of beings. (1,164,31).

Heaven is my father, my begetter, in him is my navel ; this great Earth is my mother, my umbilical cord. My womb is in these two immense shells, wherein the Father deposited his own daughter's embryo.  
(1,164,33).

By the shepherd we have to understand the wind on one side, namely, on the cosmic side, and the breath in man on the

other, namely, on the microcosmic, human side. As the wind straggles among the atmospheric waters, so the breath also roams among the bodily humours. The equation *wind=breath* leads the poet to the belief that the whole being of man finds its counterpart in this great world. This is why he calls Heaven his own father, and Earth his own mother. We already saw that in the fourth stanza the breath, the blood and the Self of Earth are mentioned, so that we are justified in detecting in the Rigveda the notion of the substantial identity of man and world, not so much in its beginning, but in its steadily growing.

Again the poet's wings get tired and the priest, mindful of the job whereon he lives, awakens, and is loud in extolling the altar as the utmost boundary of Earth, the sacrifice as the navel of the world, and so on.

Our hymn closes with the eulogy of *Vách*, and, amongst a heap of absurdities and abstruse symbols, bequeaths to us two priceless diamonds in stanzas 45 and 46 :

Language consists of four fourths which are well known to clever seers. These, however, conceal three fourths of it and do not circulate them ; so that men speak only one fourth of the possible human language

I availed myself of this stanza when I had the rare privilege of introducing Rabindranath Tagore to my countrymen in Milan, just to tell them that the modern seer of India does not follow the ancient Rigvedic sages in their cruel withholding from the world three-fourths of possible language. He has broken their secret, he has circulated among men those other three-fourths, he has found out the expressions that allow us to speak of God, so as to be sure that human language has given its all.

Anyhow, we cannot help admiring the idea of Dirghatamas that human language is only the fourth part of the possible language and as such is limited, imperfect, and constrained to split the ineffable unity of the Universe into fragments. We ought to have three other fourths of language that we might be able to express in words the All-One. But, alas, these three-fourths belong to the immortal gods and are withheld from men. The Purusha also, as we shall see hereafter, is said to be divided

into four parts, of which only one is distributed among men, and the three others among immortal beings.

It is, then, clear that, in Dirghatamas' hymn, polytheism has given way to the intuition of the fundamental unity of cosmic phenomena and of the wonderful correspondence between world and man, and that these lofty thoughts are making their way through a crowd of abstruse symbols aiming at keeping alive complicated ceremonies and sacrificial rites which gave a livelihood to a whole class of men : the priests.

*They go about speaking of Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, when He only is the divine, beautiful-winged bird. The One Being sages call by multijarious names : they style Him Agni, Yama, Matarisvan.*

Professor Deussen is perfectly right in saying that until the famous sentence of the Upanishads, *tat tvam asi*, India did not utter more epoch-making words than these of Dirghatamas :

*Ekam sad, viprā bahudhā vadanti.*

There is still another *versus memorialis* in the Rigveda :

*Kasmai devāya havishā vidhema?*

That is to say, the author of hymn X, 121, asks : *To which other God shall we offer our sacrifices than to the One God who in the beginning created all beings?* He, at first, created the waters including all germs, and in these waters he was born again as a golden embryo *together with the sacrifice* in order to become the sole God among Gods, nay, their vital spirit. Immortality and death are his reflection; all that breathes and closes the eyes acknowledges Him as its lord; to his laws, which are laws of truth, all do bow, even the gods; it is He who has measured the space allotted to the sky and to the Earth; It is He who stretching his arms has fixed the poles of Earth; He therefore, comprises the whole Universe and there can be nothing else beside Him. To this one sole Lord of creatures, namely, to Prajāpati, libations must be offered to obtain victory over foes, and gifts of good things, of wealth.

Though this hymn is very important on account of the monotheism it professes, I cannot agree with those who put it at the same rank, and even above, Dirghatamas' composition. I grant that it is clearer and simpler, but from the philosophical point of view it is far below the audacity of thought we have admired in the few winged stanzas of Dirghatamas. It is true that all Gods must give way to the One God Prajāpati, but the relation, formerly existing, between the gods and man, remains quite the same between this new one God and man, the relation, namely, of *do ut des* (I give that Thou shouldst give).

In the Vajasaneyi-Samhita. III, 50, Indra is described as saying to his worshipper : *dehi me, dadāmi te*. I think that these words could be attributed to Prajāpati quite as well. In Prajāpati's hymn there is not the least hint at the correspondence of man and world, for Prajāpati's almightiness rather makes the identification of poor man, imploring help and protection, with the Universe, quite impossible. The reference, moreover, to the sacrifice, which is said to have been born out of the primeval waters simultaneously with Prajāpati, testifies how much the poet cherished the ritual institutions. Prajāpati, as a name, means Lord of creatures and is an abstraction, but the God that appears behind this name is a personal God, very similar to any of the former Rigvedic gods. In short, the Prajāpati-hymn may be styled preëminently monotheistic, as it fosters and paves the way to a monotheistic religious tendency, but it does not belong to the scanty number of those most precious compositions which represent laity not priesthood, and which have got in them the dynamical principles we are seeking for, and of which we found hints in the Dirghatamas hymn. In the next Brahmana-period Prajāpati will preponderate and be the closest ally of the sacrificial rites and of the interests of the priesthood.

The new spiritual conquest that is apparent in many a Rigvedic hymn, is that the multifariousness of gods is only an illusion, and that there is only one God who is the creator and the lord of all things. It was vain to resist this new tendency, this radical reform, as it may be called. Every reform, we know well, is a threat against the interests of many, and these many try to the best of their abilities either to oppose it or at

least to adapt it to their conveniences. There was no chance to hold back the flood of monotheistic feeling in the last Rigvedic period; therefore, priests hastened to accept it, but at the same time tried to constrain it into the channels of their ceremonies and rites. They granted that God was to be conceived as one, but this one God had to be sought for, praised and worshipped, with the old mystical and symbolic mentality. They were quite aware of the impending danger that the laity might search after the one God with a rational, naturalistic, scientific method. And they also knew this method which trampling on the traditional lore, getting rid of all encumbrances of myths and ceremonies, led men to introspection and to the discovery of the substantial identity of the self in man and the Self in the Universe, in other words, of man and God.

Prajápati, accordingly, represents the clever conciliation of the old and new ideas, for he quite satisfies the monotheistic need and, at the same time, asserts the dependence of man on God, and, consequently, does not in the least check or impair the function of the heavy machine of ceremonies and rites. Prajápati was a priestly creation and, as such, doomed to be devoid of vitality and dynamic elements. Nay, priests needed a God even more congenial to their ideals than this Prajápati who, on account of his being born of the waters after having created them, and of his identity with Time, courts too much naturalistic and philosophic tendencies, and pays too little homage to old myths and traditional symbols.

Brahmanaspati or Brhaspati is the true minion of Vedic priesthood, the best personification of priestly ideals, beliefs, interests. His name means *lord of prayer*. Prayer is thought to have a magical influence on the gods, to be the force among the forces. Prayer is the food of the gods who, on account of it, cannot help granting boons to men. Prayer is, therefore, the basis of the Universe, and Brahmanaspati, who personifies it, is the true creator and lord of all things, the new one sole God that people are seeking for so eagerly. This priestly and irrational idea had a tremendous success, for it evolved into the posterior notion of the neutral Brahman, the rival of the lay, naturalistic and rational conception of *Atman*. We shall see hereafter that

they vied with each other in claiming to represent the main principle of the world, the soul of the Universe.

Brahmanaspati, like a smith, has cast together this world; *being* originated from *not-being*; Daksha was born of Aditi and Aditi in her turn, who afterwards engendered the Gods, was born of Daksha.

It is interesting to see how we here have the same cosmogonic conception as in the hymn to Prajapati X, 121, except that the names are changed only in order to do justice to traditional myths. Instead of the primeval waters wherein the Creator, who begot them, condescends to be born again as germ, we find the names of Aditi and Daksha, so that contact and alliance with the symbols of traditional mythology should not be lost. Aditi is the mother of the Adityas, namely, of Varuna, Mitra, Aryaman, Amsa, Bhaga, Daksha and Savitar; but she is here the representative of primeval matter, that is to say, of the waters which are at the same time the offspring and the womb of the Creator. It is clear that, from the philosophical point of view, this hymn X, 72, is inferior to the Prajapati hymn X, 121, in spite of the philosophic dress it tries to put on, in speaking of *being and not-being*.

Two dynamic hymns in the Rigveda I think I detect in the wonderful compositions of the poet Visvakarman (X, 81, 82). What at first puzzles us, is that both the poet who is singing the praises of his god and the god himself are called Visvakarman.

God as Visvakarman is the All-One; his eyes, faces, arms, feet are on every side. The seer, therefore, asks himself: where is the forest, where the tree, out of the wood of which Heaven and Earth could be framed? If Visvakarman is the All-One, he can have had no materials beside Himself, no prop, when he first created the world. The logical consequence is that in order to create this great world Visvakarman must have offered himself as a sacrifice, must have distributed his own body among beings and things. He, accordingly, permeates the world, is the world itself.

Seers understand this mystery if they only concentrate their thought on it. Let others babble about gods

different from Visvakarman: he only exists, he is the true lord of Speech (*Vāch*), he duly protects men availing himself of good deeds. Not Prajapati, but Visvakarman, is the first germ deposited in the primeval waters. *You do not know*, the seer at last exclaims, *who really gave birth to these worlds: between Him and you something has been interposed. Immured in misty ignorance, the singers of hymns go about prattling in order to get a livelihood.*

Here we discover, at last, the golden vein, the dynamic current, that is no more to be lost sight of. Our poet, far from being satisfied with the notion of the unity of God, adds that God is the world itself, in the form of an immense man with numberless eyes, faces, arms, feet. Introspection is the only way to get at him and if between him and ourselves we do not suffer anything to be interposed, then we shall detect Him in our own Self. This is why God is called Visvakarman, and the poet who is singing his praise, likewise, Visvakarman. It is not the prayer, not the father of all creatures, that is worthy of personifying God. The universal *Karman* alone is the true representative of the All-One and deserves to be identified with God. The notion of *Karman* (action, energy, deed), which is to play such a decisive part side by side with *Brahman* and *Ātman* and which will be an essential element of all later religions and philosophical systems of India, appears for the first time here, at the start of its glorious and millenary career. The notion of *Brahman* is mystic, and always associated with formalism and superstition. The notion of *ātman*, as I hope to demonstrate later on, is naturalistic and rational, and its birth-place is to be sought more among laymen than among priests. The notion of *Karman* is half clerical, half lay, for *karman* means not only the sacrificial rite, but also any action, any deed of man.

*Karman* in the meaning of sacrifice is the natural ally of *Brahman*, in the meaning of action the natural ally of *ātman*. We shall have occasion, later on, more amply to discuss this point, one of the most important points in the evolution of the religious thought in India. We have now only to ascertain what *karman* means in the name Visvakarman, and in the hymn X, 81. In the Rigvedic age, as is quite natural, *Karman*

is mainly employed in the sense of sacrifice; consequently, the author of the hymn X, 81 conceives the creation of the world as a great sacrifice, and the Creator as a wise *hotar* performing libations: *juhvaḍ rsir hotá*. The same author, however, interprets this sacrifice in a quite different manner when he says that the Creator could offer only himself in sacrifice, as beyond his own body no other materials were available. It is only logical to infer that man, likewise, cannot offer God anything but his own self. Beyond ourselves there are no materials available for sacrifice; in other words the usual sacrifice (*karman*) consisting of offerings of butter, soma and so on, has no reason at all to exist. The one possible sacrifice, is that of oneself, the offering of one's own deed (*karman*).

This is the new interpretation I am bold enough to propose of the two *Visvakarman* hymns. It is, anyhow, quite certain that their author has trampled on traditional ideas, and done so deliberately. Has he not said that the usual singers, hemmed in misty ignorance, go about prattling just to get a livelihood? The doom of hollow Vedic formalism and abstruse symbolism has been uttered long before us by a Vedic seer himself. I listen to this solitary voice, to the song of this incomparable swan, and I altogether forget the croaking of the many Rigvedic crows. What is the use of paying attention to the vain efforts of geese's wings when there is an eagle soaring in the heights?

The word *Karman*, as we said, above all signifies sacrifice, but in the compound *sadhu-karma*, which appears in the last stanza, *karma* does not in the least imply any sense of ritual ceremony but simply means *action*, deed. This new God that has to protect men with good deeds is, indeed, the swallow that announces spring. Moreover, in the last stanza, *Visvakarman* is styled the lord of speech, or of prayer; thus receiving the epithet pre-eminently claimed by *Brahmanaspati*. Is this not a sign that our poet is trying to get rid of the clerical God and to substitute for him a new God, the lay and rational God, who, he well knows, is far from being the same as that invoked, praised and extolled by the crowd of singers seeking for a livelihood?



To conclude, I think that, in the Visvakarman-hymns, pantheism has asserted itself, that the way to a naturalistic and rational philosophy has been opened, that the new method of getting at the Godhead has been announced. This new method, in fact, I feel sure I detect in the verse :

*Manishino manasa prchated u tad yad adhyatisthad bhuvanani dharayan*

O seers, you have to search in your hearts in order to know what was the prop on which standing the Creator called into being all creatures.

This opinion of mine is confirmed by the parallel passage in X, 31 :

Let man go on seeking for wealth and honouring Gods with sacrifices, but at last let him converse with his own soul that he may, through his thought, attain to a superior wealth.

*Pari chin marto dravinam mamanyad Rtasya patha namasa vivaset,*

*Uta svena kratuna sam vadeta sreyaंसam daksam namasa jagrbhlyat.*

We are authorised to consider this stanza as a commentary on Visvakarman's expression *manasa prchata* by the fact that this same hymn X, 31 repeats in its seventh stanza the whole first verse of stanza 4 of the Visvakarman-hymn : *Where is the forest, where the tree, out of the wood of which the Gods framed Heaven and Earth?*

## FOLK-LORE OF GARHWAL

*By* TARA DUTT GARIOLA.

Some years ago, the Rev. E. S. Oakley of Almora delivered a very thoughtful lecture on the folk-lore of Kumaon and discussed the subject in its various aspects. He showed how the folk-lore of Kumaon resembled that of other parts of India, and even of Europe in many respects. This is mainly due to the fact, as Mr. Oakley put it, that "men are closely related, in spite of their accidental differences, and that in the great purpose of God all nations of mankind are made of one blood, of one heart and mind, to dwell together on the earth, and fulfil one high united destiny."

While the Europeans, generally, consider the Indians as an inferior race, the intelligentsia, the townsmen of India, look down upon the masses, the rural population, as ignorant and superstitious rustics, not fit for social intercourse. In the same way, the higher castes of Hindus look down upon the depressed classes as untouchables, whose very shadow would pollute them. I am convinced that it is only by a proper study of the history as revealed in the folk-lore of the various peoples of the world, that true sympathy and mutual goodwill can be established and they can live in brotherly love together, inspired by feelings of common fellowship for fulfilling one united destiny.

It is painful to find that the western scholars who have written on this subject usually fail to bring a true sympathy to bear on their treatment of it. They seem to delight in showing up its childish or ludicrous aspects. And Indian folk lore, in particular, is often judged in a jeering spirit through their own prejudices. However, as it is difficult for a foreigner to understand the underlying spirit, I do not blame these writers.

As the folk-lore of a country is largely moulded by its environment, therefore, for a proper understanding of the folk-lore of Garhwal it is necessary to know the peculiarities of the

Garhwal hills. This hilly country extends from the holy Hardwar to the sacred shrines of Gangotri, Junnotri, Badrinath and Kedernath. It contains some of the highest mountains in the world, the peaks of which are perpetually shrouded by snow and mist. The most sacred rivers of the Hindus—the Ganges and the Jumna—take their rise in these hills. From the Vedic times down to the present, these hills, formerly known as *Uttarakhand*, have been held in the highest reverence by all Hindus. On the great *Kailash* mountain stands the throne of Siva, while myriads of gods, goddesses and fairies frequent its high summits and deep glens.

The *Vedas* and the *Puranas* are full of legends of the great battles fought between gods and demons in the Uttarakhand Himalayas. The adventures of the Pandavas, when they retired to these Himalayas and perished in the eternal snows, are sung in the Mahabharat as well as in the local folk-lore. These traditions have given rise to a large number of local songs and legends which are sung on occasions of religious festivities to the accompaniment of drums and other musical instruments. The people become inspired and full of religious frenzy and are possessed by gods and goddesses, and begin to dance and perform miraculous feats of strength,—such as uprooting big trees, jumping into burning fire, etc.

The district of Garhwal is hemmed in on all sides by other countries and peoples. On the north is the mysterious land of Tibet, the land of magic and black art,—*Jadugiri Bhot* as it is called in the folk-lore of Garhwal; to the east is Kumaon, comprising the present districts of Almora, Nainital and Nepal; to the West is the district of Dehradun or Mal as it is called in the folk-lore; while to the south is Rohilkhand, the home of the much dreaded Rohillas. The medieval history of Garhwal is full of continual wars with these neighbouring countries. The district was cut up into small principalities governed by petty chieftains of different clans and tribes. These chieftains also carried on perpetual warfare with one another on the slightest pretexts. These internal and external wars have been celebrated in legend and song of high poetic merit.

Then again, in primitive times, men all over the world

believed in gods, goddesses, fairies and ghosts. All natural phenomena were ascribed to the agency of supernatural powers, their peculiar forms being influenced by the special qualities of their environment. In Garhwal, hill and dale and forest were believed to be peopled by fairies, gods and demons who interfered with the affairs of men, for good or bad. Hence the people performed various kinds of worship to propitiate them, and the hymns sung in their honour during such worship form an important part of the folk-lore of Garhwal. A large number of the legends and songs of the neighbouring countries—especially Kumaon—have also been introduced into the local folk-lore.

The Garhwal folk-lore may thus be classified under the following main heads:—

1. Legends of the Puranic gods and demons, and their battles. The most popular and important legends under this head being those of the Pandavas, being recited in connection with the Pandav dance, as it is locally called; and the legends describing the early life of Krishna, the cowherd-god of Gokul.

2. Legends of the ancient kings and heroes of Garhwal and its neighbouring countries and their wars. These legends are locally called *Bharwalis*.

3. Legends and songs about fairies, ghosts and village godlings.

4. Ballads and love songs.

I shall now try to describe, briefly, the main features of the folk-lore under each of these heads.

*The Puranic legends.*—These appear to have been taken mainly from the *Mahabharat* and the *Bhagavat*. The *Mahabharat* legends describe the adventures of the Pandavas during their journey in the Himalayas, as well as other stories comprised in the Epic, in a most graphic manner. In every village these dances are held on festive occasions, specially during the cold weather, when the village folk—men and women—collect round a bonfire and dance and sing in choruses of remarkable pathos and beauty. It fills one with wonder to see

the people dance from sun-set to sun-rise for nine or more days performing wonderful feats, such as eating mud, grass, nettles and live charcoal; uprooting trees and jumping into fire.

The legends associated with the early life of Krishna also form a large part of the folk-lore of Garhwal. They are locally called the songs of the *Nágs*. I shall give the substance of one ballad by way of illustration. It begins with the genealogy of the gods and demons, and goes on to the genealogy of the kings of the Solar and Lunar dynasties, and of the Nag dynasty. Krishna is called the king of the *Nágs*, or *Nágrāja*. The genealogy of the *Nág* dynasty therein given is interesting. Ami Nág was the first King. After him came Phani Nag. Then Sisa Nag, then Biser Nag, then Tataki Nag, then Basuki Nag, father of Krishna. Then comes a quaint but nevertheless suggestive version of the birth of Devaki, mother of Krishna. King Auk had four queens: Diti, Aditi, Kadru and Binata. The gods were born from Diti and the demons from Aditi. The male issue from Kadru were the vultures while those from Binata were the snakes. This account is somewhat different from that given in the Puranas.

Kans was the King of the demons. He oppressed both gods and men. He levied illegal taxes of various kinds, such as on unmarried girls and on the grass that grew in the forest. He forced the gods to accept his suzerainty. Then the gods, after a consultation with Brahmá, cut open their thighs and filled an earthen jar with their blood. Brahma said: "From this blood will issue forth a being who will destroy Kans and the other demons." They then sent the jar to Kans by way of homage. Kans was much pleased and ordered the jar to be handed over to his old mother, Pawan Rekha, aged eighty years. Pawan Rekha opened the vessel and looked into it, and inhaled the vapour arising from it. This caused her to become pregnant. Thereupon, in alarm, she called her seven sons and told them about it, adding that it forboded evil to the family. In due course Pawan Rekha was delivered of girl whom the astrologers named *Deoki*, and predicted that her eighth child would destroy Kans and the other demons. This story is not found in the *Bhagavat*.

The rest of Krishna folk-lore has been taken from the Bhagavat with local touches here and there. His amorous dances with Radhika and other *Gopinis* (milk-maids) are sung in a most enchanting manner.

I now come to the next sub-division of the Garhwal folk-lore which comprises the legends of the battles and adventures of the ancient kings and heroes of Kumaun. This branch of the hill folk-lore contains thrilling stories of the valour and supernatural feats of strength of the ancient heroes who are, of course, mostly historical personages, with a halo of divinity round them. They also furnish a great deal of historical information. It is to be regretted that owing to these *Bharwalis* not having been committed to writing, much absurd and obscene matter has gathered round them. But, even such as they are, they are full of poetic beauty and feeling. These stories are so long that the full narration of a single one takes a whole day. Still I shall try to give a summary of one characteristic legend. It refers to the conquest of Tibet or Bhot, by two ancient Garhwali heroes named Sidwa and Bidwa.

Once upon a time there ruled a king in Bhutan (Tibet) by name Sonpal. He has seven daughters, the eldest of whom is named Jotra Mala. She is as beautiful as the full moon. She practises austerities and prays to the goddesses Ganges for twelve years in order to gain her ideal husband. When the Goddess at length appears to offer a boon, she asks for a bridegroom as beautiful as herself. The Goddess grants her prayer, saying that she shall be married to Krishna, the Lord of Dwarka. Thereupon Jotramala appears to Krishna in a dream. On awaking, Krishna becomes restless, and sends a letter through the black bees to his younger brother Suraj Kunwar who ruled in Bimlikote. The black bees swarm up into the sky in so thick a cloud that even the sun is hidden by their shadow. They reach Bimlikote and fill the whole palace of Surja Kunwar. They sting his queens. Eventually the queens awaken the Raja, and the bees swarming on his shoulders drop the letter into the king's lap. On reading it, Surja prepares to start for Dwarka,

but his queen Bhompa Gujri dissuades him from going, saying that whoever goes to Dwarka never returns. To this, however, Surja pays no heed. Meanwhile bad omens are noticed. The water mixed with ashes, which was put in a basket for washing Surja's clothes, does not trickle through. The hair of Surja's head begins to droop. His pet goat Tila begins to sneeze.

Surja is not dissuaded even by these portents and leaves for Dwarka. On the way he comes to the peak called *Kalecha* where dwell seven witches. They seat him on their bed, where he falls asleep. The witches measure his body with a three-stringed thread and turn him into a ram with a spotted head and white tail. This, it appears, is what they used to do to every one who ventured to go to Dwarka. His queen Bhompa who is a magician herself, sees Surja in a dream, in that plight. She puts on male dress, takes up a flute, rides her pony and reaches the home of these witches. She converts her horse into a bee, and sitting on a rhododendron tree begins to play on her flute. The witches hover round the tree, charmed by her music, and invite her into their house, there entertaining her with a sumptuous feast. Bhompa, after eating the feast, enmeshes the witches in a net through her superior magical powers. She then threatens to kill them unless they restore her husband. They point to the place where Surja is tied up in the form of a ram. Bhompa thereupon restores him to human shape, and does the same for all the other Rajas who met with a similar fate. Surja still insists upon going to Dwarka, and all remonstrances having failed, Bhompa lets him go. On reaching Dwarka, Surja is received with due honor by Krishna, who tells him about his seeing Jotra Mala in a dream and his love for her. He further asks him to go over to Tibet and fetch her at any cost. Surja agrees to go, but asks Krishna to send Sidwa Ramola with him.

*Sidwa* and *Bidwa* were hill chieftains of Ramoligarh and great heroes. Their spinning top weighed nine seers; the blanket worn by each weighed nine maunds; and their loin cloths measured a hundred cubits in length. They had a tiger-shaped drum hanging over their shoulders and a seven-mouthed conch, weighing nine maunds. They had twelve score of flocks, sixteen score of herds, and a nine-stringed iron whip. On receipt of

Krishna's letter, similarly conveyed by the bees, Sidwa gets ready to start. He dons his helmet and arms. He equips himself with magical appliances and conjures up spirits. He looks like a fearful serpent, or a roaring lion rushing down a hill slope. He blows his seven-mouthed conch, which calls forth all the fairies and nymphs from the high hill of *Khaint* (a peak near Tehri) who come and dance round him, ready to obey his behests. Then Sidwa rides forth on a fine horse, which flies up into the sky, and touches the disk of the sun. On the way he meets with adventures amongst witches, demons, etc., all of whom he overcomes and reaches Dwarka safely.

Then comes their departure for Tibet, whereat Surja's mother and all the people of Dwarka lament, for no traveller has ever returned from Bhot. Surja at last quiets his mother, telling her to keep some milk in a dish, a naked sword placed erect, and a garland of flowers, as mementos. He says if the milk turns into blood, the sword topples over, and the garland withers, then only should she know that Surja is dead. Their first halt is at *Sandandhar*, the last ridge of mountains from which their country could be seen; their next at the ridge called *Reonidhar*. At mid-night the witches who dwell there appear, as also the nymphs from the *Khaint* peak. They carry away Surja to *Khaint*, leaving Sidwa alone. Sidwa beats his drum which calls back all these creatures who had made away with Surja. As they come down and dance round him, Sidwa throws a net over them, and forces them to bring Surja back from their mountain abode. But strangely enough they had meanwhile taken away half his beauty.

After meeting with various other adventures they reach the country where men walk on only one leg. They fight and kill the king of that country and proceed further. They then reach a ridge called *Pipaldhar*. Here they again play on their drum and flute, and making the nymphs of *Khaint* reappear, compel them to surrender the portion of Surja's beauty which they had stolen. In return, these nymphs, extort a promise from Surja to marry them on his way back from *Bhot*. At last, they reach the river which lies on the borders of Tibet, at the *Bishwat*



*Shankrant* (in April), which was the occasion of a great bathing festival in Tibet.

Now Sidwa plays a trick on Surja. He says : "Surja I have an attack of fever. To-morrow is the *Bishwat Shankrant* when Jotra Mala will come to bathe in the river. I am going off to sleep. You look after the business of Jotra Mala." He there-upon smokes a big dose of hemp and falls into a long sleep.

Jotra Mala comes in a palanquin early next morning. When Surja approaches her palanquin, she becomes enamoured of his beauty. She takes him home with her and asks her father's permission to marry him. He is brought into the royal palace and begins to live with Jotra Mala. The other sisters of Jotra Mala become jealous and plot to kill Surja. One day Jotra Mala goes to the spring to wash Surja's clothes, after warning Surja not to go out. During her absence her sisters invite him to dinner and poison him, throwing his body into a pit of salt. Immediately the milk in the dish at Dwarka begins to turn into blood, the sword falls down and the flowers in the garland wither.

This makes Krishna think that Surja had been killed. He at once sends a message to Bidwa, younger brother of Sidwa and requests him to proceed to Bhot. Bidwa, also a great magician with all the spirits at his beck and call, disguises himself as a monk and making double marches, in spite of all the obstacles on the way, reaches Sonpal's capital. He first goes where Sidwa lies asleep, awakens him and tells him about the death of Surja. On hearing this Sidwa shakes with genuine Rajput rage. The fastenings of his garments snap, and the stones of the hills are ground to dust beneath his stamping feet. Both the brothers go to the king's palace, lay hold of his daughters, and threaten to kill them all unless they deliver up the body of Surja. They point out the pit of salt where Surja's body lies buried. Sidwa and Bidwa take out Surja's body and by means of their magical powers, restore it to life. Then they kill the six daughters of Sonpal who had murdered Surja, as also Sonpal himself, who appears to have instigated them. They place his son Ajai Pal on the *gadi* and return to Dwarka with Jotra Mala.

This story, stripped of its poetic embellishments, refers to the invasion of Tibēt by an ancient Raja of Garhwal. The Raja had fallen in love with Jotar Mala, daughter of King Sonpal of Tibet, and sent an army under the command of his younger brother Surja Kumar with Sidwa and Bidwa as his generals. Prince Surja was treacheously murdered by the other daughters of Sonpal at his instance. Sidwa and Bidwa killed Sonpal and these daughters, and putting Sonpal's son, Ajai Pal, on the throne of Tibet, returned with Jotar Mala to Garhwal. The substitution of Krishna for the Raja of Garhwal is explained by the fact that in ancient times the Raja of Garhwal was looked upon as the incarnation of Vishnu or Badri Narain himself.

Several other similar stories describe the wars between the two neighbouring districts of Garhwal and Kumaun. Some refer to the internecine quarrels between the various petty chieftains who ruled in Garhwal. The heroes are ever ready to lay down their lives for their ladies. The wives in their turn are no less heroic, either dying in the funeral pyre as *Satis*, or bringing up sons fired with the idea of taking revenge on their enemies. The Garhwali mothers of those days, like their Spartan prototypes, exhorted their sons either to return with the shield or on the shield. In one characteristic legend there is a description of a heroic mother who when exhorting her young son to go and fight the slayer of his father, presses her breast from which a stream of milk is ejected with such force that it makes a hole in a thick iron plate, impressing thereby on her son that he who has drunk of such heroic milk needs must be a great hero himself. Thus convinced of his own strength, he rushes forth roaring like a lion, and destroys the hordes of the enemy with his club.

I will now pass on to the third branch of Kumaon folk-lore, dealing with songs and stories of fairies, ghosts, and village godlings in which the Garhwali villager has a deep rooted faith. He believes them to be the causes of his diseases and troubles, and will incur great expense to propitiate them. Even the loss of a cow or a sheep is ascribed to the wrath of his family god or

goddess, and immediate steps are taken for their propitiation. Although faith in these supernatural creatures is dying out under modern influences, still it is a main part of the religion of the common people of the hills. It is indeed a pathetic sight to see a poor *dom* selling his all, and then begging and borrowing, in order to perform the Puja of his family god Nirankar. The fairies are locally called *Achris*. They are not like the malignant spirits of other countries. They are good hearted, amorous beings, fond of young folk, and usually possess young girls. There are beautiful stories about their carrying away to their mountain abodes young warriors, on the lines of the story of Surja Kunwar. One Jitu Bagdwal was so carried away by these nymphs and returned to his home after they has extorted a promise from him to surrender himself after a fixed period.

The persons possessed by these *Achris* dance to the accompaniment of a drum, and a big puja is held at the end. The *Achris* are the spirits of young and unmarried girls of respectable families whose funeral rites were not performed. They are also the daughters of Ravan the king of Ceylon. According to the local legend, Ravan offered his daughters to Siva, the presiding diety of the mountains, who became his *chelies* or disciples. Hence some dwelt on the Piri peak and were called *Bhararis*; others settled down on the Khaint peak and were known as *Achris*. These *Achris*, according to the story, went to a flower garden and began to pluck flowers and dance. There they met Krishna and became his *Gopinis* and still dance the eternal dance with Him.

The *Bhuts* are the spirits of young men whose funeral rites have been omitted. They are malignant beings who cause sickness and loss, and are very difficult to propitiate. They possess both young males and females. Those possessed by them dance to the accompaniment of a drum and have to perform an elaborate *puja*. Another class of *Bhuts* is known as *Ran Bhut*. They are the spirits of soldiers killed in battle by foul play. They are very revengeful and oppress the families of their enemy.

The village Godlings are either the ghosts of the ancient heroes such as Gorail, Sidwa and Bidwa, or are family gods and goddesses. Their number is legion, but the principal ones are,

*Ghandial, Binsar, Nagraja, Narsingh, Khetrapal Kali, Nanda-devi, Nirankar, Goril, Sidwa, Bidwa, Jitu Bagdwal and Bhairab.* Great festivals, called Jat or Jatra, are periodically held in honour of these godlings. The dancing and singing goes on for several days, and at the conclusion a large number of goats are killed and feasts given. Each of these godlings has a legend or song about him. I cannot here do more than mention a few typical stories.

The most important of the village godlings is Nirankar. He is chiefly worshipped by the *doms* or lower classes, but also by the higher caste Hindus in the Southern parts of Garhwal. He is the most dreadful of all the godlings and the failure to fulfil a vow to do his *puja*, or any irregularity in the ritual, is sure to be visited with condign punishment, in the shape of some calamity to the family. I shall briefly give the substance of a few songs sung with much devotion in honour of this god :

The first song describes the genesis of the world thus :

In the beginning there was neither earth, nor sky, nor water. Nirankar, the *Guru*, alone existed. The *Guru* rubbed his right side and from the sweat thereof a female vulture was born. The *Guru* rubbed his left side from the sweat thereof a male vulture was produced. Thus the female was placed over the male. The name of the female vulture was *Soni Garuri* and of the male *Brahma Garur*. The *Guru* regretted that, while he had wished to create human beings who would serve him, vultures should have been produced instead. The male vulture flew to the East and then to the North. He then came to marry *Soni Garuri*. But *Soni Garuri* objected, saying that as they had been created by the same *Guru* they were brother and sister, and could not marry. This she follows with taunting remarks about his ugly shape. *Brahma Garur* begins to weep. *Soni Garur* repents and picks up the tear drops which fall from his eyes. The tears penetrate her womb and she becomes pregnant. Thereupon she flies to the abode of *Brahma Garur* and begs him to build a nest for her to lay her eggs in. *Garur* now retorts with taunts as to her chastity and ends with : "You are very ugly, I cannot accept you as my wife." *Soni* in her

turn begins to weep. Brahma Garur is moved to pity, and says : "There is neither earth nor water. Where can I build a nest for you? Come and lay your eggs on my wings." Soni replies, "You are the vehicle of *Vishnu* and would be polluted by my laying on your body." The egg thereupon drops down and is divided into two. The lower half becomes the earth and the upper half the sky. The fluid inside the egg become the sea, and the fleshy part the earth. Thus did Nirankar create the world.

Then comes an interesting story about the invention of ploughing :

After the Guru had created the earth, and all the beings that dwelt on it, man approached him and said, "How shall I live on this earth?" The Guru first called the lion and asked him to plough the earth. But he replied that as he was the king of the forest it would be derogatory for him to plough. Then the Guru called upon the other animals, one by one, who all declined to plough. At last the bullock was asked and he agreed. The Guru was much pleased with him and blessed him thus : "Thou shalt be worshipped and feasted on the twelve days of the *Dewali* festival. Silver caps shall be put on thy horns of the *Dewali* festival. Silver caps will be put on they horns and none shall do without thee." Then the Guru called Melu the ploughman, and asked : "Of what wilt thou make the plough?" Melu named all the metals from gold to iron. But Nirankar said : "The poor cannot afford to make their ploughs of precious metals. Make the plough of wood and the plough-share of iron." Then Melu went to the blacksmith and asked him to make a plough of wood for him and offered to pay him nine *khars* (one *khar* is equal to 16 maunds) of paddy as wages. But the Guru said : "The poor will not be able to pay as much as that. Let the wages for making a plough be one winnowing basketful only, for all alike." Then the Guru called the bullock and put silver caps on his horns. He also created butter to rub his neck with, so that the yoke should not hurt it. He then ordered the pig to rub the butter on the bullock's neck with his snout. The pig ate part of the butter himself and rubbed only a little on the bullock's neck. Hence

the neck of the bullock has remained soft and is hurt by the yoke. The Guru cursed the pig and foretold that, in the Kali age, he would meet with a cruel death by being pierced with a sharp stick (this refers to the way in which a pig is killed).

Here is another curious story :

Kabir, the weaver, had dedicated one basket of grain and two cocoanuts to Nirankar. Nirankar went to Kabir's house in the garb of a beggar to receive these offerings, while Kabir was away. He asked for alms from Kabir's wife. She said that the only food left in the house was in the basket which had been dedicated to Nirankar. The beggar told her to give him something out of this. Kabir's wife went on taking out the grain from the big basket to fill the beggar's bowl, but could not fill it. She emptied the whole basket and still the bowl was not full. She then took out the two cocoanuts also and offered them to the beggar. The Sadhu told her to close her eyes, which she did. On reopening her eyes she found, to her great astonishment, all her rooms overflowing with grain, and two sons playing by her side in place of one. But the Sadhu had disappeared. He was a cripple and had taken the two cocoanuts under his armpits. While running back from Kabir's house, the cocoanuts dropped in an unclean place and were changed into male and female pigs. This story is evidently intended to explain why the *Doms* in the hills sacrifice pigs to Nirankar instead of goats.

There are many other interesting legends connected with the God Nirankar, which I omit for want of space. I will content myself with giving the substance of a ballad relating to *Goril*, another godling of the hills.

Once upon a time there was an old Raja by name Jhalurai. He had seven queens but no male issue. While hunting in the jungle, he felt thirsty and sent his men in search of water. They went to the abode of the goddess Kalindra to take water from the spring. But she did not allow them to do so. They reported the matter to their Raja, who invaded Kalindra's territory and married her. When she was about to give birth to a child the other queens grew jealous and plotted against her. They threw the child into the river in a silver casket soon after

its birth. This child's name was *Goril*. He was a supernatural being and was born through the right eye of Kalindra. The baby Goril called out to Jhalurai from the river and the latter went and picked him up. He killed all the six queens who had thrown the child into the river. This Goril succeeded Jhalurai on the throne and was famous for his justice. There was a dove who had her nest on a tree within Goril's territory, in which she had just hatched her young. A neighbouring Raja happened to pass with his retinue, and took out and killed the nestlings. When the dove returned with food she did not find them in the nest. She lamented bitterly and going to Goril sat over his throne and wept. When her tears fall on his head he looked up and saw the dove, and heard the story of her bereavement. Goril was filled with righteous indignation and took a vow not to rest until he had made her oppressor shed tears of blood. He raided the kingdom of that Raja, killed him and his people and destroyed his territory.

There are similar stories connected with every other village godling.

The fourth sub-division of the Garhwal folk-lore comprise the love songs. Although the greater part is full of indecent matter usually dealing with some love intrigue between young men and women, still one cannot fail to appreciate much of the poetry which is found in them. The imagery and natural descriptions are remarkable and compare favourably with the pastoral poetry of other countries. As an illustration I give the substance of the song called *Pheonli Rauteli* :

Once upon a time there lived one Nagu Saunial in Ujjain who had a daughter by name Pheunli Rauteli. She was of surpassing beauty, her back as beautiful as the full moon, her front as the sun. Her heel was as round as an egg, her shins like the mallet of a washerman, her thighs full as a plantain tree, her shoulders resembled a pair of doves; her waist was as well-shaped as the mud house of Kumali (a kind of green wasp), her lips were the two halves of a pomegranate; her teeth jessamine flowers. She sits on the eastern window of her house

and puts on fine clothes and jewellery. She dresses herself and puts the vermillion mark on her forehead. She goes to a pool to fetch water, and stoops to fill her pitcher from it, but finding, that the frogs have polluted the water goes to another, and begins to fill her pitcher. To her surprise she sees the reflection of her lover, Bhupati Rautela, in the water below. He is seated above the spring. He throws a garland of flowers round her neck. She looks up. The lovers meet. When she returns home, her father chides her for being so late. He also asks her as to who had given her the garland. She makes up all sorts of excuses and explanations which do not satisfy him. At last she discloses the name of her lover and prays her father to marry her to him, to which the father consents. The song is full of poetic fire and imagery which it is difficult to reproduce. There are many other ballads of similar beauty.

Besides the classes of folk-lore above-mentioned there are a large number of Garhwali proverbs and sayings of much practical wisdom, riddles and jokes of remarkable humour, which if collected would throw much light on the social institutions and history of the people.

It is a surprise to me that there is no provision in the National University of the Hindus,—The Benares Hindu University—for the study of this branch of knowledge. I hope and trust that a chair may soon be founded for the teaching of Indian Ethnology and arrangements may be made for carrying on research work in that line.



## APRIL

Breezy April, vagrant April,  
    Rock me in your swing of music.  
Thrill my branches with enchantment  
    At your touch of sweet surprises.  
In my life-dream by the wayside  
    You come startling me from slumber ;  
Wilful in your mood fantastic—  
    Courting, teasing, and inconstant.

Breezy April, vagrant April,—  
    Living with my lonesome shadows,  
I know all your fitful fancies,  
    Leafy language, flitting footsteps,—  
All my boughs break into blossom  
    At your passing breath and whisper ;  
All my leaves break into tumult  
    Of surrender at your kisses.

Rabindranath

## THE ITALIAN EPICS

By PROF. GIUSEPPE TUCCI.

### II

• It is only natural that, in the state of Italian society which I have described in the introduction, our epic poems could neither be inspired by strong natural feeling, nor animated by religious motives, nor enlivened by the pride of a people conscious of its present greatness and confident about its future. It was a sheer literary attitude through which the poets sought the realization of their ideals and of their artistic dreams. They derived their inspiration, of course, from the popular poems or novels, and clothed these rough and simple narratives in an artistic dignity; but it is worth remembering that, although accepting almost in their totality the plots and episodes of the strange and silly tales that were circulating among the common folk, this learned and sceptic pagan society, which no longer believed in miracles, but in facts,—this world of Machiavelli and Galilei,—laughed at and scorned the credulity of the lower classes.

The poetry which issued from such a society could perhaps have been the epic of a dead world: it was but the ironic expression of a conception of life which never took hold of Italy, and was already banished to the realm of dream and fancy. The consequence was that, instead of a revival and glorification of the old chivalry, these poems proved to be a reflex of the new humanistic society, permeated with its wit and scepticism, and a living representation of the wonderful awakening of consciousness and thought which characterised the culture of our Renaissance.

Luigi Pulci (XV century) is nearest to the popular soul, not because he shared the credulity of the people, but because the principal aim of his work was the same as that which moved the bulk of the authors of the numberless novels and poems circulating among the people,—that is to say, to amuse and to be amused. Any real artistic preoccupation is absent. Learned, but not so imbued with humanistic culture as many of his con-

temporaries were, he follows closely the models that the popular literature offered to him; and although he tries to blend in a harmonious unity the various elements he found scattered in the most different sources, adapting them to the organic plan of his poem, he is lacking in that genius which only can create an artistic masterpiece. In his *Morgante Maggiore* which treats of the heroes of Charlemain's cycle, the shade only remains: all figures assume a popular and often vulgar colour, every epic situation degenerates into a common event. We have in the *Morgante Maggiore* the echo of the noisy laugh of the people, rather than the smile of the man of letters. It is not the polished irony of a cultivated mind, but the coarse scoffing of an incredulous and witty multitude. Instead of Tancredi or Riccardo, or Orlando who gives the name to the poem, we have Morgante,—Morgante who is but a servant of Orlando, and at the same time the voice and the symbol of the people, in a fantastic world in which everything and everybody is unsubstantial, unsteady, unprecise, as in a dream. There is nothing of the tragic or heroic: the battles and the feats of the heroes, the death itself of Orlando, cannot inspire the poet to higher tunes: he is too sceptic and too rationalistic to take seriously what he is narrating.

In Matteo Maria Boiardo we find quite another man. He was a humanist deeply imbued with classic culture. He had not the ironical and scornful spirit of the Tuscan writer; but, full of admiration for Greek poetry, he believed that it was possible for him to give to Italy a Homeric poem: that is to say, he did not realize that the unity of feeling, hopes, culture, which inspired and animated the Greek epics was quite lacking in our people. He is too much in earnest to sing of a society which could only be portrayed true to life by a powerful imagination and a sparkling phantasy, but he has undoubtedly the merit of having prepared the advent of Ariosto. In fact, up to his time, the two cycles of which we have spoken before had a separate and quite distinct life. The one sang the feats of the Paladins, and the other told love's stories. Boiardo blended the two. The background of his poem is still the war between the Christians and the Unbelievers, and the heroic deeds of the champions of

the faith. But the interest of the poet is no longer in the battles or in the destiny of Paris besieged by the Saracen army : what he creates and represents is a fantastic world in which events and persons are unstable and changing as though evoked by some magic power. And this magic is that of love symbolised by Angelica, a woman of divine beauty who, at the suggestion of the devil, was sent by the father into the Christian field in order to bewilder the minds of the Christian warriors. She possesses the key to the heart of the Paladins : she is the sole spring of this weaving world of the *Orlando Innamorato*. But Boiardo did not realize and emphasize the contrast between this world of sheer imagination and the reality of the new society ; moreover he was not a genuinely gifted artist. His work therefore could not become a heroic poem, nor had it the fine irony of the *Orlando Furioso*, the masterpiece of Ariosto.

Boiardo could not complete his poem : which ends with the siege of Paris by the Saracens. From here Ariosto begins. True humanist as he was, he tried to give new life to the classic comedy and to sing his feelings of love according to the Horatian model, in Latin verses : and son of his time, he was indifferent to the fate of his fatherland, which however was not quite the case with Boiardo. Ariosto's world, his only world, is that of Art. Pursuing the life of a courtesan, he lamented his bad luck that did not grant him the leisure and quiet to live only for his studies and for his art, far from the noise of the world, or the preoccupation of public duties and, as soon as circumstances allowed him to take his longed for rest, he dedicated all his spiritual strength to his poems, that is to say to the realization of his artistic ideal and fancies. The *Orlando Furioso* is as perfect in content as in form,—a world of mere phantasy of course, but now realized through the highest expression of art. Only we Italians can feel all the charm of the sweet, if sometimes melancholy music of his verses, that embody the serene and pagan voluptuousness with which he responds to the harmonies of nature.

It is difficult to give in brief the content of the poem owing to the many and various episodes which the inexhaustible phantasy of Ariosto incorporates into the unity of his poem.

It begins with the defeat of the Saracens; but the greatest warriors, instead of revenging this blot on all Christianity, are only pursuing their personal aims. Brandimarte, heroic Amazon, who hopelessly loves Orlando, wanders after the object of her dreams, while the Paladin, who contents her feeling, is in turn trying to conquer the heart of Angelica. Rinaldo is looking for his Boiardo. The king of the Saracens, Agramante, taking advantage of this opportunity, again attacks Paris, and tries to burn it. He would have succeeded in this object had not God, in order to prevent the ruin of the fortress of Christianity, sent down a miraculous shower and quenched the fire. After a long wandering Rinaldo comes back and reanimates the Christians, while some of the Saracen champions are still away in pursuit of their personal revenges or love affairs, as in the case with Sacripante who has fallen in love with Angelica. The consequence is that Agramante, deserted by his best warriors, is in great danger.

Meanwhile Orlando hears that Angelica has married a humble soldier of the pagan army. This news, which means the end of his dream of love, drives him mad. Insane and furious he wanders through Africa and Spain, brutishly wasting countries and frightening people. Christianity cannot tolerate that its best champion should behave in this manner and it becomes necessary to restore him to his wits. Therefore a knight, Astolf, comes to the rescue and undertakes the difficult task of going up to the moon where, in a large valley, the wits of all who have become insane in this world are deposited. Ascending through heaven with his winged horse, Pegasus, Astolf reaches the moon and, having found the bottle in which Orlando's wisdom is enclosed, comes back with it to earth. With great difficulty they succeeded in catching Orlando, and as soon as he smells the contents of the bottle brought by Astolf, he recovers his wits.

All this time they are fighting near Paris. In order to avoid the consummation of a great massacre, it is agreed, by common consent, that Rinaldo for the Christians and Ruggieri for the Saracens, shall decide the issue of the war by a duel. But while the two champions are fighting, Agramante violates

the agreement., A general battle follows which leads to the complete defeat of the pagan king; he escapes but his fleet is scattered by a storm and he arrives in his capital only to assist at its burning by the Christians.

True, this shifting background of the poem has a centre round which persons and events are attracted and which amidst the floating mass of the fanciful adventures, represents the only fixed point: this centre is Paris from which everybody starts and to which everybody returns. But, as can be realised by this summary, it is no epic of the actual world; but only the world of chivalry of our renaissance,—that is to say, a parody of chivalry; not the reality but the appearance; not the genuine strength of ancient warriors but the elegant aristocracy of our courts; not the bloody struggles of the middle ages but the harmless jousts and tournaments of public festivity.

Italy had forgotten her past and her military glory: her tyrants instead of armies employed the sword of their emissaries; to war they preferred diplomacy, that subtle and unscrupulous diplomacy of which Lorenzo was the artist and Machiavelli the scientist. Cunning instead of bravery, intelligence instead of power, specially appealed to the heart of this cultivated and sceptic pagan world. Iago, as Macaulay justly remarks, was certainly the type which the Italian of the Renaissance would have far preferred to the irresolute nobility of Othello. Ariosto himself tells us, at the very beginning of his poem, that he is singing "the women, the nights, the armies the loves which happened when the Saracens came to Europe;" but it is of course his own time which is really reflected in the *Orlando Furioso*: no longer an inward feeling of religion, but a luxuriant paganism, no miracles but the magic and wonderful play of forces, no more love but voluptuousness, no national pride but a mere desire to pursue an artistic ideal, not a reality spiritualized by the faith, or a deep conviction but a fanciful world above which is floating the ironical smile of the poet, pleased with the magical creation of his phantasy, but not for a moment seriously believing in its consistency.

Tasso has a quite different character. When new events seemed to change the consciousness of our people after the reck-

less and intoxicated freedom of the Renaissance, the Lutheran reform had aroused the Catholic counter-reform and the Roman church, afraid of losing its power, had proclaimed a holy war against the licentiousness of religious as well as social customs, and checking all research of free thought, had started a rigid intolerance of which the first victims were Giordiano Bruno, Bruno, Campanella, Vanini. The smiling and frank indifference of the preceding century is followed by a bigotted and false puritanism. What is necessary to respect according to the new conception, is no more the inward feeling but only the external appearance. Tasso lived in this period : in him, the exigencies of a man of letters imbued with classic thought and the scruples of the faith, the free impetuosity of the artist and the cautious restraint of the learned, are struggling and fighting without any possibility of ever being harmonised. By nature irresolute and biassed with a pessimistic vision of life, his internal struggles wear out his mind and at the first shock of reality he gets so exhausted that his reason breaks down. While with Ariosto his poem took birth from the thirst of his soul to accomplish the expression of his artistic ideals, with Tasso the canons of the critic preceded the free imagination of the artist.

Tasso wanted, ever since his youth, to restore to life the ancient poems and he begins by discussing which rules and laws must be observed in writing a heroic poem : that is to say, narrating a great feat which takes hold of the soul of a whole people, which is edifying, and inspired by true religion. After the first essay of the *Il Rinaldo*, where he tries to introduce in the poem the principle of Aristotelean unity, the thought occurs to him that nothing could offer a fitter subject and more serious inspiration to a poet than the glorious deeds of the Crusades. And to him nothing seemed more living and appealing to the soul than the revival by the Turks of the danger of the Saracene invasion. Out of this preoccupation of a learned man, rather than from an artistic impulse arose the *Gerusalemme Liberata*. The subject of the poem is the first crusade which he chose because his aim was also to create a work of moral edification. For the mere whimsical sequence of events which characterise the *Orlando Furioso*, he substituted a net work of cause and

effect determined by the free will of man. All happenings beyond human power are attributed to God and to his miracles. Instead of a multitude of Paladins and champions, each pursuing his own interests, we have a central figure in Jeoffroy the chief of the Christian army, who in the mind of Tasso, was destined to represent the ideal type of the Christian hero. But he is too perfect in his abstract superiority, so that he seems more of a saint than a warrior; the consequence is that he has not enough of life.

This preoccupation with the likely and the logical was prejudicial to Tasso's poetic power, and, in spite of his great care for order and organic completeness, we find that something essential is lacking in the poem. The interest of it,—of which he was also conscious,—lives more in the episodes than in the whole; the reason being that Tasso had not by nature the temperament for feeling and expressing an epic world. Moreover, the society in which he lived, in its political subjection, and in its lack of any serious spiritual feelings, could not give a real epic inspiration. In fact he was specially a lyric poet, and, rather than in singing Homeric feats, he was more a master in expressing the moving world of his soul, an idyllic and melancholy world which insinuates into the monotony of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, the dreaming charm of the *Aminta*.



## THE BAÜLS OF BENGAL

By RAMES BASU.

People outside Bengal, who are interested in her literature, have heard of her Vaishnava poets. But, whether residing in other Indian provinces or living in foreign lands, they have known nothing of the wandering Baüls of Bengal, till a very recent date. It was perhaps for the first time that Rabindranath expounded their basic philosophy and translated some of their songs before a distinguished audience in France. This lecture on *A folk-religion of Bengal*, now finds place in his *Creative Unity*. It was as unexpected as it was fortunate that the world-renowned Bengali poet and philosopher should have interpreted the thoughts and messages of these unrecognised folk-poets who live outside the social pale of modern Bengal.

Even in Bengal the Baüls are not given much thought. They, in their turn, do not acknowledge the regularly constituted social institutions or the rigorously observed social injunctions. Their seats, called *ākhrās* or *āsīhānas*, are not generally visited by the ordinary man, because these are located in out-of-the-way places and also because the inmates are not given to speaking out their mind to uninitiated outsiders. Neither are they in the habit of committing their doctrines to writing; they hand down their songs and traditions direct from preceptor to disciple in order that the esoteric mysteries they teach may not come within the reach of scoffers.

The story of this sect is a very interesting chapter of the religious history of Bengal. Mysticism, for which they stand and which is of the essence of their cult, has ever been an integral part of Indian life and literature, art and philosophy. Esoteric practices full of symbolical meaning, which occupy a predominant place with the Baüls, have taken root in the Indian mind from a very remote past. The main features of the Baül cult seem to have been derived from or in some way connected with those of the Vajrayāna Buddhists, a branch of the Mahāvāna school, which had its stronghold in Bengal. Indeed

the musical literature of the latter may fairly be taken as the precursor of the songs of the former. Not only the spirit but the manner of expression is strikingly similar.

The *sandhyā-bhāshā*, or twilight dialect of the Vajrayānists is closely analogous to what are called *rāgātmika* (symbolic and *prahelika* (enigmatic) methods of diction employed by the Baüls. Those who are not conversant with their inner mysteries are at a loss to make anything out of the mass of apparently unmeaning words. In the Vajrayānist songs collected by Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Sāstri there occurs a word, *Bajula*, which I am inclined on phonetic grounds to take to be the origin of the Bengali word *Baül*. The commentary says that the word means a 'Vajradhara' or a *guru* of the Vajrayāna school. Gradually this term must have been adopted by the later school of Baüls who were influenced by Vaishnavism, divested of its original significance. Still later it is used in the Chaitanya-charitāmrita, and the Nathic chronicles, simply in the sense of a mystic and ascetic wanderer. No other derivation of the word, attempted by different scholars, is tenable in the light of these facts.

In the Vaishnavism of Bengal, pure Bhāgavatism which was prevalent during the reign of the *Pala* kings was the first phase. The next phase of Krishnaism soon became popular, and the advent of Radha during the period of the *Senas* gave a new turn to the entire Vaishanava mythology and literature. During the early Muhammadan rule the theme of the amours of Radha and Krishna provoked poetical outbursts amongst the Sanskritist rhetoricians like Vidyāpati as well as amongst the adherents of the *Bāsuli* cult which obviously is also an offshoot of Vajrayāna. This latter class was represented by Chandidas. In the Chaitanya period the two forces combined. Rupa and Sanātan Goswamis, the most prominent of the former, worked hand in hand with the latter,—amongst whom the Vajrayānist tendency towards mystification was not yet entirely lost,—in the persons of Rāmānanda Ray and Krishnadās Kaviraj. Thus the neo-Vaishnavism of Bengal absorbed the tendencies of Vajrayāna, Sahajayāna and the other Buddhist cults. It is to be remarked that the influence of the Sanskritists is apparent in the purely

Vaishnava songs, and that of the mystics in those of the Bāüls who are variously known as Vairāgis, Sahajiyās, Kartābhajās, etc.

This composite nature of Bāüliism is responsible for its dual significance in life and in literature. From the Buddhist Tantrics the Bāüls have drawn their manner of symbolisation and some of the rites of their sect, and from the Vaishnavas they learnt to beautify and sweeten the spiritual life in communion with God the Lover. They have been gainers in each case, in their contact with Tantricism and Vaishnavism. For unlike the latter they put Man and God in the place of a mythical god and his symbolical mistress. They received their philosophy from the former, and their poetry from the romanticism of the Vaishnava period.

When the Bāül cult was confronted by Islam it did not fight shy, as did the other cults of Hindu origin. It is to their credit that the Bāüls could approach and absorb the Sufistic traits and tenets of Islam without losing their own speciality or injuring that of the other. This is only one of the numerous instances of the real synthetic capacity inherent in the Bengali race-mind. What the policy of the sword on the part of the rulers failed to compel, was gradually brought about by the truth and beauty of the people's soul. Thus a real Hindu-Muslim *rapprochement* was the net result of this movement. And the poetical literature of the Bāüls, to which both Hindus and Muslims contributed, is truly *national* in the sense of being evolved from the midst of the people. Not only in theory, but in practice also, respect and reverence are offered where they are really due, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. The Hindu *Sāins* have their Muslim disciples, and the Muslim *Murshids* have their Hindu following. In one of the sects of the Bāüls when a devotee attains to the highest state of the *Sāin*, he wears a string of cow-bones as well as *tulasi*-beads. As inwardly so outwardly no difference is recognised.

In India every sect is based on some philosophical or metaphysical doctrine, and none is without its particular rites, and *sādhana* (method of realisation of truth). As regards the first, the Bāüls do not go by the Brahmanical systems of philo-

gophy. Nor, like the other Hindu sects, have they any mythical or Puranic gods and goddesses. They accepted the symbolism of the loves of Radha and Krishna partly as a necessary means of preserving the very life of the sect in the days of the Hindu Revival, and partly because it helped to give a concrete literary shape to their mystic purposes.

On the side of *sadhana*, the system of the Baüls consists mainly of two interrelated aspects. First the *deha-tattwa* or the theory of the human body as a microcosm,—which is akin to the Tantric view. Secondly the theory of realisation by steering through the fleshly career of the composite human being to the haven of final bliss,—which reminds us of the theories of *deha* and *ānandas* as explained and practised by the Vajrayānists. The whole process may be said to be a spiritual fight against the senses which, if unchecked, are the most obstinate enemies of man. This fight is deemed to be a necessary step to the higher spiritual life. But on this first step stumble a great many of those who lack proper restraint, and the spirit of aloofness, in handling sense-affairs. This has often led to serious excesses both in theory and in practice. The morals of the weaker followers have given way to gross sensual tendencies instead of being helped to self-purification. Until this stage of stress and struggle is over, the Baül has strictly to adhere to the prescription laid down by his own particular preceptor.

The process of realisation does not stop with the first conquest, but when the realities of human life have been faced and conquered, the Baül is to enter a new life of Love in which true mysticism finds its own, and both Man and God take an active part. Human life is given a new value and dignity by the Baül. He is not at all a pessimist of the ordinary Indian type,—on the contrary life, to him, is worth living if only for the love of God. Amidst all the ills and sufferings of life, the Divine Lover, though sometimes seemingly indifferent or even merciless, is waiting for the Human Soul, without reunion with whom the Creator's scheme of creation is but incomplete. To the Baül the rhythm of creation requires that Man should realise in full the charm of human life,—the life in and through which Man enjoys God and reciprocally God enjoys Man. This may be

highly audacious, but its very daring has unlocked the heart of the Baüls and drawn therefrom songs of the joys of communion or the pangs of separation. In this stage the Baül is no longer struggling, but is a *Rasika* (enjoyer). His whole life becomes as a flute on which soft or keen notes are being played by unseen fingers. He is no longer chained down by outward observances and is as free as when musical notes melt into the air.

Turning to the literature of the Baüls we notice that corresponding to the two aspects of Baulism, there are two distinct types of literature, characterised respectively by esoteric symbolism and mysticism proper. These two do not always run parallel, but are often mixed, with a disastrous result, which is neither good philosophy nor elegant poetry.

As is the case with the Vajrayánists, the ideal life within our real one is what really matters to the Baüls. Reality in the ordinary sense is shadowy nothingness. And they have evolved an elaborate symbolical phraseology to give expression to the inner and esoteric modes and stages of spiritual realisation.

The special number of *pukurs* or ponds, and *manjaris* or attendants, the theory of *álek* or unmanifested, the *háwá*, or awakening of the *kula kundalini*, the six *puithás* or steps, the six *chakras*, the successive processes of refining and crystalising the juice of sugarcane into sugar typifying the successive higher stages of realisation, the five *tattwas* or elements, the term *jiva* as used for outside people,—these are but a few of the mystic symbols used for concealing their esotericism from the uninitiated. Further, the crafts and events of ordinary social life also furnish them with other symbols. Thus the oilman, the boatman, the weaver, the milkman, the smith, the school-master, the birth of a baby, the marriage ceremony, the play at dice or cards, the funeral rites, the battlefield are not to them toiling folks, or interesting facts of the outer world, but denote different characters or stages in the Divine Drama. But the delineation of the themes comprising these symbols does not claim any literary finish and soon bores those for whom they are not specially intended.

What Vajrayána or Tantricism could not aspire to, and what even Vaishnavism failed to keep up, was however achieved

by the Baüls whose mystic outpourings of the heart always stir the soul of Bengal. And here they claim a common place of honour with the Indian Rishis of the Upanishads and the Sufis of Persia. A particularity of the Baüls is, that when the ultimate Truth dawns upon them realise it not to be Beauty only but Love also. This Lover in God they call "the Man of the Heart." The special distinction of the Baüls lies in the fact that, while the Rishis and the Sufis were highly cultured people, they are usually neglected and unlettered rustics. This points to a spiritual democracy in which Man's birthright for realising the deepest mysteries is freely recognised. The beauty and spontaneity of the songs of the Baüls in which personal touches heighten the effect, place them high above many other schools of Bengali singers or chroniclers. From the world of puranic theology and symbolic philosophy these master-singers bring religion down to the region of poetry, tinged with a mysticism actually lived by them, just as Bhagiratha made the waters of the Ganges flow from the dark caves of the rugged cliffs down on the thirsty plains of Hindusthan in numberless rills and rivulets.

When the Baül is also a poet, his mode of expression becomes happy and ceases to be laboured. His Brindábans have no geographical existence, but are within the heart of Man. He compares human life with the Hindu ceremony of floating lamps on the river. His songs of diving into the darkness of existence reveal a new light on life. To the beloved *Man of the Heart* he pours out his song-offerings. His *holi* festival is not of the common type—it represents the coming of the Lover through the exuberant splendours of the spring. The fury of the summer storms, the eternal flowing of the rivers into the waters of the ocean, the playing on the flute, are only some of the themes to which justice is done in a way worthy of any great poet. When the Baül sings of the flowers which are the loves and beauties of this world and which are to be linked up into a garland for the Divine Lover by the string of man's own heart, he commands our respect as a true worshipper of Beauty and not a mere symbolist.

The Baüls are pre-eminently known as singers and com-

posers. No other branch of literature is as a rule cultivated by them. They have their own tunes and strains. They play on their stringed instrument of the most primitive type, while they sing out their thrilling *tremolos* which rise and fall like the waves on the paddy-fields and on the wide rivers of Bengal. The Baül tune proper and that of Bhátiyál have their distinctive place in the indigenous musical system of Bengal which differs fundamentally from classical Hindu music, or that of the other provinces of India.

The Baüls are no idol-worshippers. They discard the use of images even for those who are beginners on the path of realisation. They rely entirely on their *gurus* for guidance, and ordinarily revere them as divinities. As Ramakrishna Paramahansa said of them, "they do not like inanimate idols, they want living man." As worshippers of the *karṭá* or living man they are called *Karṭábhajás*. But this does not exhaust the varieties of sub-sects in Baüldom. There are the *Auls*, *Kishori-bhajas*, and many others. When a Baül has reached the highest plane of perfection he is honoured with the title of *Sáin*.

The place of woman in the sect of the Baüls is worth particular notice. They set a special value to the loves of man and woman because their idea is, that love for God can be attained only through the refinement of that attraction which is natural in all flesh. It is their study of sex-psychology which they turn to practice. When they were admitted into Vaishnavism, the Baüls did not agree to forsake their women attendants. Though the strictly ascetic Vaishnava leaders were against this mode of living, they connived at it in the case of the Vaishnavised Baüls who were left to manage their own affairs. In fact Baüliism here combines traits of Tantricism and Vaishnavism. The idea is, that in order to be benefitted by the right use of the sex-instinct, man should live with women, but not be overcome by the calls of the senses. In their symbolic language : the black-bee shall sit on the cup of the lotus but not suck the honey therefrom. Women members of this sect are often known to have ascended a high stage of realisation. One was known to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The short story of Rabindranath,

called *Bostami* is based on the life incidents of a woman of this sect. But the connection with woman in a religious sect is detrimental to its high purposes. And it has done irreparable mischief to the Baüls as a sect. The idea of *parakṛyā*, or non-wife spiritual mate, so highly spoken of by the Vaishnava poet-rhetoricians, is conceived of by them as specially applying to the case of Radha and Krishna, while the Baüls follow it in actual life, and have abused it to the utter degradation of the sect. They have vitiated the high original purpose by succumbing to the hankerings of the flesh.

Though they have their *ākhrās* or *āsthānas* the Baüls are homeless wanderers. With the renunciation of social life they have forgone all considerations of blood, or birth, or wealth. Many of their rites and practices differ from those of the pure Vaishnavas. They now take up any female attendant, merely by interchanging their necklaces of beads. They do not burn their dead, but inter them. Sometimes they paint their sect-marks on various limbs with holy mud.

The migratory habit of the Baüls is kept up by the institution of *melas*, or fairs, which are held all over rural Bengal on various occasions and in the different seasons of the year. The Baüls flock to these fairs in huge numbers and sing their soul-stirring songs to the accompaniment of their one-stringed instrument. Such gatherings at Kenduli, in memory of the poet Jayadeva, at Ramkeli in Maldah, at Khardah, at Ghosepara, the centre of the *karṭtabhajas*, at Langalbandh in Dacca, and at many other places, are of the nature of self-organised institutions where people from the neighbourhood meet on certain specified days, for which no advertisement, expenditure or propaganda are at all required.

These people have taken to the profession of begging alms. Though now not properly understood, the social economy of Bengal provided a kind of division in social service,—the householders had to give alms, and the Baüls were required to administer to the spiritual needs of the former, not by learned discourses, but by means of catching songs. Thus the system of *tahal*, or rounds, originated and the Baüls go from village to village on their errand of music. The Baüls are reticent by



nature and do not mix with other people, but they are not indifferent in carrying out their share of social service.

The Bāüls have preserved orally, or in writing, connected chronicles of their sect. Outwardly Vaishnavised, they asserted themselves and kept up their own line of *gurus* to stimulate their own persuasion. The orthodox Vaishnava school of Bengal did not satisfy their aspirations, and these they have voiced in a mass of *sahajiyá* literature, ever since the 17th century. They trace their descent from the old mystics who lent their influence to the cause of Vaishnavism. They recognise nine chief apostles of the *sahajiya* cult called the nine *Rashikas*, or enjoyers. The poets Jayadeva and Chandidás, the mystic Rámánanda Ray, the philosophers Krishnadás Kaviraj, and Taranîraman, are claimed by them, and much honoured in their circles. Later schools have of course their own particular lines of *gurus*. It may not be out of place here to mention our conviction that the Krishna worship which was prevalent in Bengal from a long past and was followed by the orthodox school of Vaishnavism even before Jayadeva, was transformed and mystified by a school of pre-Chaitanya mystics who introduced the loves of Radha in a symbolical sense. Chaitanyadeva himself accepted this mysticism at the hands of Ramananda Ray. This mystification of pure Vaishnavism reminds us of the leavening of Islam by the Sufi mystics of Persia.

It was normally to be expected that during the enlightened 19th century the Bāüls should have lost whatever influence they might have exercised on our people. The Christian missionaries were at work, winning over members of this sect to their own fold. Yet, surprising to say, they survived even in this age of new movements in life, religion, and literature. When the material power of the British nation introduced new machinery and modes of life the Bāüls did not change their front. They rather found new materials to work on, and the railway, the water-works, the balloon, the post-office, the courts of judicature, the machinery of administration, the Howrah bridge and the English school all gave them fresh scope for symbolisation. Again, instead of vanishing into insignificance, the spirit of the Bāüls seems to have invaded the atmosphere of

the cultured who were living in the towns. Some of the promoters of recent neo-Hinduism were very fond of Baül literature. Ramakrishna Paramahansa freely communicated with them and often sang their songs. Isvar Chandra Vidyāsagar also was fond of Baül songs which he often heard from a Muhammadan faqir.

Further, as we know, the main currents of thought and literature of the age flowed through the channels of journalism, heroic epics, lyrics of love and drama and fiction of the modern type. The psychological anomaly, which frankly baffles us, lies in the fact that successive batches of young Bengali writers, who followed neither the old popular styles of *yātrā*, *kavi*, *pāñchālī*, etc., nor even the modern poets and novelists, were attracted by the songs of the Baüls, and went to the length of imitating them. The rustic tunes of the Baüls were retained; at first their crude and laboured symbolism was also kept up; but gradually a purer mysticism prevailed with these modern writers. In social status, culture and persuasion these writers had nothing in common with the rustics whom they followed. To name only a few, these are,—Kalinarain Gupta, Ananda Chandra Mitra, Chandranath Das, Kangal Harinath, Fikir Chand, Krishnakanta Pathak, and Indranath Roy Choudhury. They even assumed pen-names resembling those of the Baüls. Both Brahmos and orthodox Hindus were among the number of these writers. Men like Rajnarain Bose, Dwijendranath Tagore and Aswini Kumar Dutt set a high value on these neo-Baül songs. Mr. A. P. Sen, the well-known composer is indebted to the Baüls for some very catching tunes.

We cannot conclude this article without touching on the influence of the Baüls on the later songs of Rabindranath. As he has himself written, he did not at first give much thought to these rustics, as they seemed to be but little different from the other folk-singers of Bengal. But once the beauties of the best mystic productions of the Baüls had caught his attention, he absorbed the essential spirit of their mysticism, and utilised this new vision in his own songs. He has also adopted and remodelled the tunes of the Baüls, thus adding to his renown as a great composer. The characters of a blind Baül in a play

of his and the Baül woman in the story already mentioned, are not mere accidents,—they are the outcome of the poet's observation of and sympathy with these people.

• As I have tried to show in a Bengali article, the mystic literature of Rabindranath falls into three epochs. The first evolved with the development of the inner self of the poet himself, whereof the *Kheya* and *Sonar Tari* are the typical poems. The second was initiated by his contact with the western mystics, *e.g.*, Maeterlinck, in his plays *Raja*, *Phalguni*, and then more fully developed when the poet asserted himself in the *Post Office* and *Red Oleanders*. The third dawns with the poet's understanding of the Baüls. Here the modern master-singer met the older master-singers. But no trace of the old conventional symbolisation is any longer to be met with and the richer flute of the poet has taken the place of the one-stringed instrument of the Baüls. The old mystic has merged in the new mystic who has heard new voices and dived into profounder depths.

## INDIA AND AFRICA.

*By* C. F. ANDREWS.

India stands out over against the East Coast of Africa across the Indian Ocean. One of the most fascinating problems which modern history presents is that of the future relationship of these two countries.

In the long forgotten past the land area itself stretched from one continent to another. Naturalists are able to trace many resemblances in plant and animal evolution, which point to a connected land surface. Possibly human life itself had appeared before this great land cause-way was actually sundered. Even when the sea swept forward and the continents were finally divided, the ancient link between India and Africa was never entirely broken by the intervening ocean. A migration from shore to shore has taken place, and from a very early date the Indian traders from the borders of Kathiawar and Kutch and Malabar, either by hugging the coast in their tiny ships, or else by boldly taking advantage of the monsoon winds at their different seasons, and sailing straight across, have brought their merchandise to Mombasa or Zanzibar or Sofala and have carried African products back to Cochin and Goa, to Porbunder and Surat.

In modern times, with ever-increasing pace, the steamers have continued to make the Eastern coast of Africa more and more accessible for Indian commerce. To show how short the distance has become, I was told by one of the ship's officers on board the S.S. Karoa, that if a high speed for passenger service were required, it would not be difficult to accomplish the journey from Bombay to Mombasa in six or seven days. The aeroplane and the airship, whose advent is now imminent, will lessen the distance still further.

The old, delightful memories of the traditional hospitality of the South African people have reached India on account of the sea voyage round the Cape. In those bygone days of the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century, the journals of the East India Company Officers constantly relate, that the one

bright spot in a long and tedious journey was the hospitable welcome given to the passengers of every India-bound merchantman when they reached South Africa. A record of this is to be found in the biography of Raja Rammohan Roy. We are told that in the excitement of the news about new-won liberties in Europe he slipped on the gangway while visiting a French merchantman in order to pay his tribute of respect to liberty-loving France. The fall seriously injured his leg and impaired his walking powers, and he never recovered from its effects. But the record of this gesture towards Liberty on the part of this greatest humanitarian and world-thinker of the early Nineteenth Century was worth the sacrifice.

Thus, through recorded and unrecorded time, India and Africa have stretched out hands to meet each other across the sea. The fact that they stand face to face, with no intervening land between, cannot be without its meaning for the evolution of the human race. The relations between them must inevitably become closer and closer. Nothing can ultimately keep the two countries apart.

When we examine further the geographical position, it becomes apparent that India must always be, for Africa,—as Raja Ram Mohan Roy called it,—the “Gateway of the East.” And by the word “East” in this phrase is meant that vast mass of the human race, which is by far the densest on the surface of the globe. For it needs to be very carefully noted that the centre of gravity in the earth’s population *has always lain in Eastern and Southern Asia*. India and China, with their immensely ancient and permanently prolific populations, have always weighed down the human scale in their own direction. Even to-day, in spite of the rapid increase of population in America and Europe, the centre of gravity has still remained in South-Eastern Asia.

The trend of recent events has made this age-long disproportion more acute even than before. For, while Europe has been decimated by the slaughter of the Great War and by the still more terrible disease and famine which have followed in its train, South-Eastern Asia has remained comparatively immune. While the birth-rate has been increasing in the East,

here has been a terrible decline in the birth-rate of the West. All these factors have made the disproportion greater instead of less.

India itself is one of the most thickly-populated countries in the world, containing one-fifth of the earth's human inhabitants. It is also the threshold of the Far East. It occupies, in this way, a unique position. For it is on the direct highway of the greatest concourse of the human race.

It is easy to understand how the commercial life of Africa, as it leaves the leading strings of Europe, and feels its own direct and unhampared movement forward, will inevitably gravitate, along its Eastern coast, more and more away from Europe and towards this vast population of India and the Far East. For one ship that passes from Durban eastward to-day, there will be a hundred ships in less than fifty years' time. This is an anticipation of the future which is well within the borders of safe surmising.

When we study history on a broad scale, and over great intervals of time, the sustained intellectual power which lies deep in the heart of Indian civilisation must strike the attention of every impartial observer. With the one possible exception of China—and even that a doubtful exception—there is no country in the world which has kept the light of pure intellectual knowledge burning so long and with so bright a flame. Egypt, Babylon, Syria, Tyre—all these have passed into oblivion. In Central and Southern America, material civilisations have come and gone. Nothing remains of them to-day but heaps of stones and dust. Greece illuminated the world for one supreme and unforgettable moment. But how brief was that period of illumination! How rapidly it passed back into darkness! India, on the other hand, through almost numberless generations, has ever been intellectually renewed. Revival has always followed close upon decline. India, in her old age, seems to have attained the secret of intellectual youth.

Our own generation has witnessed one of these renewals. To-day the intellect of India is wide awake—perhaps more actively wakeful and with more expectant eyes than that of the West itself. This intellectual alertness of modern India has

gone far beyond the bounds of the limited circle of the English-educated classes. India is like the pool of immortality, of which her own poets have sung, throwing up men of genius, men of artistic and creative power, men of spiritual insight and intuition, from among the masses of the common people.

For, in India of modern times, there are not only to be counted authors and artists of world-wide intellectual reputation such as there whom we love and worship, but there are frequent examples of obscure men and women to be met in villages and country places, who have thought deeply upon the mysteries of life, in their own pure and simple way, outside the common rut of conventional thought, and have lived daringly and fearlessly in accordance with their own unsophisticated intellectual vision.

Therefore, if intellect rather than wealth is regarded as the ultimate criterion of human advance; if intellectual attainment combined with simplicity of life,—that “plain living” and “high thinking” about which Wordsworth wrote,—is a surer test of human progress than any increase in the mechanical and material standards of physical comfort, then the Renaissance of Modern India stands out in the history of our times as signal in its achievements.

In relation to Africa itself, one constant feature needs to be remembered. While there has been, from time immemorial, that living human contact between the two continents, which I have already intimated, this westward trend of India has not brought to Africa as yet any great or deep intellectual development. The history of Madagascar has not been fully explored. It may be found that Hindu influences did actually reach that island at a very early date, bringing culture with them. But such a theory must still be regarded as doubtful. The evidence is insufficient to form any firm historical basis.

In the times that history clearly records, the main religious influence which has come from India to the East African coast has been that of Islam. But this influence, unfortunately, has not hitherto been strongly developed on its intellectual and spiritual side. No art and music, no poetry and literature, such as made famous the cities of Delhi and Baghdad, have ever flourished in Zanzibar and Mombasa. No college or university

of any eminence, such as those at Cairo and Bokhara, has ever been founded on the East African coast. Trade has been all in all.

There is even a darker picture which can never be forgotten. Slavery was for more than a thousand years the constant concomitant of trade. It is true that a certain veneer of civilisation did spread down the East Coast, and had its permanent centre at Zanzibar. But it did not reach the interior, which remained a jungle. Its humanising powers were always counteracted by the intolerable raiding and bartering of human beings as mere chattels.

The Indian merchants, who came over in great numbers to the East African coast, took indeed their full merchandise of slaves back to India for service in the courts of Indian monarchs; but there is no clear indication that these Indian merchants themselves at any time actively engaged in slave-raiding. That ultimate iniquity was done by others. It is also remarkable how small the slave merchandise was in its extent and how little it affected the bulk of the Indian population. There were no gangs of slaves, as labourers, driven under the terror of the lash to plantations. The few slaves that were transported to India were kept for domestic service.

Turning back once more to the intellectual development in India itself, we note that the Hindu-Buddhist movement, which introduced the greatest spiritual expansion known to Indian history, went southward and northward and eastward, but not westward across the sea. It has left no permanent mark on Africa at all; indeed it is doubtful if it ever reached the African coast.

The motives underlying this earliest enthusiasm of religious thought, which sprang from the personality of Gautama, the Buddha, were all of them universal motives: they were not racial or national. The expansion aimed at by the Buddha himself was also universal. The Word went forth from the Buddha's lips that the Law of Brotherhood and Love was to be preached to all creatures. Gautama included the sentient dumb animals, as well as human kind, in his message. He included also by his direct injunction every country of the habitable earth.



Yet, in spite of this, by some mischance of history, all the glorious self-sacrifice of those wonderful days,—when civilisation at last really awoke to be a blessing and not a curse upon the earth,—never appears to have passed across the Indian Ocean to Africa. It went rapidly down the whole length of India to the South and reached Ceylon and found there a permanent home. It went, with equal rapidity, northward and across the mountain passes of the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush. It made a second home for itself in Tibet. The Western kingdom of Bactria was also won over to the Faith. The western coast of India was reached as well as the South. But before it reached the African side of the world, the religion of the Buddha appears to have exhausted its powers.

It will be well, by way of contrast with this sudden contraction of Buddhism on this side, to follow out a little more in detail the expansion which took place in other directions. During the first thousand years of the present Christian Era, the progress southward and eastward and northward was steady and continuous. The Buddhist faith became the one, pure, civilising influence in Java and Celebes and the adjacent islands, and also in Burma, Siam, and Cambodia. From thence, by different routes, the same religion was carried onwards along the sea border to China, Korea and Japan. The northward movement also, through the Himalayan Mountains, did not die away. It gave the Mahayana—the “Greater Vehicle”—to Western Asia, and at length, traversing the central plateau eastwards, joined hands with the Buddhist missionaries who had been working along the Chinese coast. Thus the whole vast population of Asia, South and East and Centre, became the Buddha land, the Buddha kingdom. Asia was integrated and unified, for the first time in its religious history, from Bactria in the West to the further islands of the East. One Civilisation, with humane ideals, covered this part of the earth’s surface.

I have myself seen the marks of this religion in one of the noblest of all its monuments—that of Boro-Bâdûr (the great Buddha) in the Island of Java. There, the history of the whole epoch is recorded in stone carvings of exquisite beauty, which stretch for nearly three miles in galleries of sculpture round and

round the summit of the hill of the Buddha. Pictures are seen of Gautama himself preaching to men and birds and animals—ministering to the wild beasts and to the scarcely less wild tribes of the human race. The far-extended galleries depict the landing of the Buddhist monks, the winning of the aborigines by deeds of sacrifice and love, the stormy voyages and shipwrecks which had to be undergone, the acts of universal kindness practised towards all living creatures, the spreading of a gracious culture over the earth. It is the glory of this great Migration from India, that it was never stained with blood or with any lust of material conquest.

But why did this religious movement never pass to Africa? What force stopped its course on the Western shores of India, prevented it from going further? We may be quite certain that it was not due to any difficulties of the journey; because such difficulties were the greatest incentives to faith and devotion in the eyes of the intrepid Buddhist monks who endured incredible hardships in other countries and on other seas.

How great a loss this failure to reach Africa was cannot easily be estimated. It threw back, for a thousand years, the civilisation of East Africa,—one of the greatest outstanding tasks still left for civilised mankind to accomplish. Even if, as in Java and Celebes, the effects of the Buddhist migration had not been outwardly permanent, nevertheless its inward result could never have been wholly effaced. The new wave of culture which has come to-day from the Christian West, could have then swept forward without the immense lee-way having to be made up which we find to-day.

It is interesting to notice, that when such a floodtide of religion advances to civilise mankind, it carries with it its own laws of development and also its own limitations. Thus Buddhism, after the first enthusiasm was over, found its stationary level in Asia itself. Christianity was able to penetrate Europe, but its current became choked and blocked with debris as often as it struggled forward into the interior of Asia. Islam again found an easy outlet for its own tidal current in the decaying Byzantine Empire and along the North Coast of Africa, but it failed to pierce through the barrier of Western

Europe except at the extreme point of Spain. We clearly do not yet understand the inner workings of these mighty forces of the Spirit. The words are true of all time : "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth ; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

It is now possible to consider, however briefly, a further fact in the relation of Africa to India, namely the rise and expansion of Islam in both countries. To a remarkable degree, after the first great advance of Islam had come to a standstill in Europe, the later trend of this powerful religion has been towards Africa and India. Its main conquests have been in these two areas. The future expansion of Islam is likely to be worked out in India and Africa. Islam has thus become one of these binding forces which link India and Africa together. The bond is likely to become stronger, instead of weaker in the Twentieth Century.

There is one feature in Islam, as it has developed in India, which is of great importance to the future of Africa in its Eastern border. In India itself Islam has been tempered and softened by contact with Aryan Hinduism. The subject is too long for discussion, but the fact may be taken for granted. There should be no serious difficulty, from the ethical and religious standpoint, for a common understanding to be reached between a liberal Western Civilisation and the New Islam of this type.

In the Nineteenth Century, this natural intercourse between the two coast lines of India and Africa, about which I have written hitherto, was suddenly and violently disturbed by the introduction of an artificially stimulated immigration of thousands of Indian labourers, chiefly from Southern India, under a debasing indenture system. The labourers were induced by professional recruiters,—often men of the worst character,—to come out to a country they had never seen and to conditions of life which they had never realised.

This artificial system of recruited immigration was applied, during a period of over 50 years,—with short intervals,—to Natal. Instead of a sprinkling of settlers and merchants coming over each year, who would naturally be men of independent character with the spirit of adventure strong in their blood, the

poorer classes of the peasant population of Madras and North India were uprooted by thousands from their own homes and transplanted to an utterly alien soil. The artificial immigration thus induced led to still further consequences. For Indian traders came over in their train with a new object in view. Instead of seeking to promote the wholesale exchange of merchandise between India and Africa, they settled down in Natal to trade with, and too often to trade upon, the indentured Indian labourers. Thus the natural course of emigration and immigration between the two countries took a different turn,—a turn, I cannot help feeling, for the worse.

In this article I have tried to write a dispassionate account of the age-long action and re-action between India and Africa. It appeared to me that some knowledge of the facts of this background would be needed before a scientific study of the racial conflict which has now arisen could be undertaken. I shall hope to deal with the present situation in a later number.

## A DOUBT

To-day my thought is this.  
Love never was, nor, in a perfect being, is.  
Love is the ultimate song  
To be made of this world of wrong.  
How, no voice may tell  
Out of wisdom's well ;  
For man is animal yet,  
Though his feet be skyward set ;—  
O savage heart of the world,  
O eagle ! Who mistook you for a dove ?

Jehangir J. Vakil.

# THE ROLE OF FEAR IN PRIMITIVE RELIGION

By K. C. MOOKHERJI.

The earliest history of religion began with Animism. We hardly find traces of any religion that preceded it. Animism still continues in the form of nature-religions and in the polydæmonistic beliefs of different tribes. Polytheistic religions that prevail among many civilised nations are based upon it and have developed through traditions. But polytheism gave place here and there to nomistic religions based upon law or holy scripture. This development occurred later than polytheism and should be regarded as a further progress in religious evolution. Still further development takes the form of monotheism which again in logical types of minds, passes over into a kind of philosophy.

Considered generally, the polytheistic religions include most of the Indo-Germanic and Semetic religions, the Egyptian and some others. The nomistic religions comprise Confucianism, Taoism, the Mosaism of the eighth century B.C., Judaism, Brahmanism and Mazdeism. The universal religions are Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammadanism. These are the three periods which must have preceded one another in the order of religious progress. But in the history of religions it is not to be believed that they are related to one another only in the genealogical sense such as the Vedic to the Aryan, Confucianism to the ancient Chinese religion, Buddhism to Brahmanism, etc., and have remained unaffected by the others to which they are not allied by descent.

With the progress of civilisation and the rapid development of the means of communication sufficient facilities were given to the people to come into contact with one another and thus to imbibe the ideas that developed in different spheres of their actions. So religions, particularly at higher stages, were derived from many different sources though primarily considered, they had as their basis this or that particular prevailing religion without which they might not have been founded.

Now it is clear that religion first of all originated in polydæmonism or spirit worship, then in due course it developed and assumed the nomistic forms and at last culminated in monotheism. Thus we find a progressive march of generalisation in religion from an almost unlimited multiplicity up to unity. It stands now clear that animism is the ultimate basis upon which religion started and then later developed with the intellectual progress of the races. But the various races of mankind differ greatly in their powers of abstraction and generalisation, some can scarcely get beyond the concrete while others can well move in the region of the abstract. This difference of aptitude is expressed in their religions also. So many peoples have never passed beyond polydæmonism. This polydæmonism or animism still prevails in different forms among the existing communities where civilisation has not flourished, but even in higher religions too its numerous traces are found and are explained by Prof. Tiele as 'the survival and revival of the older elements'.

Religion is after all a product of imagination. In the higher forms of religion imagination indeed combines greatly with reason and may at every step be influenced by the experiences in this world; while in the lower forms, particularly in animism, imagination is largely or entirely unrestrained by reference to reality and tends to merge in mere fantasy, where the emotional element is all powerful and the rational element vanishes.

The perceptive experience of our ancestors was not the same as ours. We in our everyday experience try to explain everything in terms of mechanical causation. The primitive mind lacked the proper conception of mechanical causation and of natural law. The only kind of causation the primitive people seemed to be aware of, because of the predominance of volitional and emotional factors in them, was their act of volitional response from the feelings excited in them at the occurrence of striking natural phenomena. They felt and acted in response to the excited feeling to which their belief was due; while their action, as expressed in the performance of rites and ceremonies arising thereout favoured and strengthened that belief. Thus

the idea and the action as determined by the inner working of an emotive impulse promoted by intense imagination formed almost an *ideo-motor* circuit which, in practice, resisted even the slightest interruption. We therefore find people still believing in the fanciful traditions that the outbreak of epidemics, or the occurrence of earthquakes or floods is due to the displeasure incurred by the inhabitants for their crimes or sins of the presiding dieties who are to be appeased by the scrupulous performance of sacrifice and other ceremonies for getting rid of the pest.

People are also found to believe that the mere performance of certain rites with a purpose brings the purpose to fruition. This is simply an affective belief based on intense and excited imagination. So any interruption or change in the rites is believed to invalidate the whole thing, and when this interruption in the ceremonial performance comes from a different community the feeling underlying the affective belief bursts forth with a fury which often results in communal disasters. But the process that forms the emotive circuit of belief and rites becomes gradually strengthened by the general effect of habit, tradition and prejudice. This emotionally constituted *ideo-motor* circuit becomes gradually dissociated through experiences and a relatively isolated system of religious ideas is formed which resists comparison and criticism and does not even recognise the principle of contradiction. So incompatible beliefs are seen to have been cherished in the animistic conceptions by the people without their becoming fully aware of their incompatibility.

Here their behaviour seems to be similar to that of a child who at one moment sticks pins into her doll, pulls its hair, throws it about, and at the next moment gives it her greatest attention by feeding it and dressing it, as a mother. Primitive men held that plastic images of objects were as real as the objects themselves. The Chinese regard the images of objects as their alter-egos or indwelling soul. The Mandans of North America believe that the pictures are as living as their models. This primitive belief is still prevalent among certain sections of the Indians who refuse to have a picture taken because they think that it will give the man who possesses the picture a power over



them. Primitive people regard the name as real, as a vital part of them, just as much a part of their individuality as their eyes or teeth. So savages have secret names for themselves which must not be known abroad. This is a means of self-protection; for one can gain magical power over another by knowing his name. The primitive man further believed that whatever attached to one's shadow attached to one's self. He believed that to injure anything detached from a man's body would have the same effect on himself. So in case of one's failing to throw his enemy into the fire a lock of his hair is thrown in for the gratification of anger towards him. This is all based on illusory analogy and makes for the foundation of the well-known maxims of magic.

The religious idea that is known as *Mana* reveals still more clearly the immaturity of the primitive mind. If a man's pigs multiply and his gardens are productive, primitive people believe it is not because he is industrious and looks after his property, but because of the stones full of *mana* for the pigs and yams that he possesses. A hunter enchants his weapons casts spells upon his expected prey, wears an amulet or stone round his neck or a tuft of leaves in his belt and at the same time he carefully prepares his weapons, patiently tracks his prey, warily approaches and slays it. But he will not in the least think of his bodily strength and the sharpness of his weapons or of his personal efforts and alertness as causes,—the incantations and spells though contributing objectively nothing to the event will be all important to him because of his imagined belief in their power to bring him supernatural assistance.

This means that some ideas remain so strongly and inseparably associated with certain other ideas that a mental circuit seems to be formed of them and the ideas revolve so rigidly in the circuit that no other idea can come into contact with them so as to expose their absurdity and irrelevancy. It is for this reason that the validity of the observances such as taboos, omens, mimetic and panto-mimetic practices was never questioned by the primitive people but on the contrary they adhered to the traditional beliefs most scrupulously. It is still the practice in India to observe food-rules in daily meals, to recognise the note of a bird or a lizard as indicative of success or failure in some

enterprise and also to follow the panto-mimic magic by trying to bring on rain by spilling water or avenge oneself on the enemy at a distance by self-display.

The peculiarity of these primitive beliefs is due to the intensity of unrestrained imagination people possessed at the time. It was the excited emotional impulse that determined their judgement and so it happened often that they came to believe that things connected in thought were also connected in fact. When the primitive people experienced the world of objects they missed the true perspective of it; they imagined in the objects forces which were stronger than themselves and which they believed to be the determining agents of their destinies. Every striking object that took part in their experience became personified and its activity was explained in terms of purpose and desire. The objects of their experience such as the flash of lightning, the noise of thunder, the destructive power of the flood, etc., no matter whether animate or inanimate, were believed in as mysterious powers having ultimate control over their interest and destinies. So they were to be appeased in order that they might not interfere with their material well-being. They began to think that all their sufferings were due to their indifference or actions displeasing to these forces. And different forms of worship and rituals were introduced to please these fearful agents and more or less a bargaining with them in offering sacrifices developed to avoid their anger.

It was thus that supernaturalism, instead of naturalism came into existence; the world became the world of spirits and not of facts and the instruments that developed to please the spirits were those of magic rather than those of scientific method. Now we shall turn to consider the nature of feeling underlying animism.

When the primitive people failed to meet the pressing needs of life in hunting, love, war, agriculture etc. and grew anxious about such failure but could not account for it, they indulged in unrestrained imagination and believed implicitly that there were mystical powers in ultimate control of the natural events which had to be propitiated so as to make the circumstances favourable.

to success in their enterprises. It is still customary in India that *Ganga* the Goddess of water, is to be worshipped in order to avoid any catastrophe during a boat journey, or that Indra, the God of thunder, should be propitiated so that no rain, thunder and storm might cause hindrance in the celebration of a particular ceremony. It was due to the variety of human interests in life that a number of demons or spirits were conceived to preside over them and to direct the affairs favourably or unfavourably according as they were pleased or displeased by the offerings presented to them. So the first ideas of religion arose from a concern with regard to the events of life.

What man fears, but is powerless to control, he seeks to appease. Hence the prominence of devil-worship and of the belief in baleful spirits amongst lower races, hence likewise the persistence of kindred beliefs among the ignorant in civilised countries, hence the world-wide *customs* of averting the wrath of gods or of buying their favour by sacrifices, smearing their images with human blood(1) and wreathing them with human intestines. To this perhaps is due the rise of a social class,—medicine men and priests,—into whose hands all ghostly and ghastly functions fall and who secure dominance over their fellow-men by pretending to be the mouthpiece of the gods, to forgive sins in their name and to make known their will. Thus fear span out all this fanciful imagery, people dreaded harm from every quarter, particularly from things near at hand whose dire effects touched them closely, as the whirlpool and the breaker, the falling tree, the devouring beast, the venomous reptile, and all phenomena that were very striking, such as lightning, eclipse, flood and famine.

Polydæmonism had thus its origin in fear, but it is not meant that the place of fear in animism is therefore due to its intrinsic qualities; for it is not in virtue of a particular quality or property that fear is the primitive emotional form of religion; it is not to be understood that elements required for the making of religion can be found only in fear and are not present in other

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(1) This is the practice till prevailing in an altered form even amongst some of the people of India who, instead of sacrificing a human being now-a-days, sacrifice a gourd, which with an human image marked on it is filled with red water as a substitute for human blood, before the Goddess Durga.

emotions. The fact is that the circumstances in which the primitive people lived and also the stage of their mental growth were such as to keep fear in the foreground of consciousness. Besides fear was the first of all organised emotions and still to this day it appears first in the young animal as well as in the infant. So the rôle of fear in primitive religion is due to circumstances which make it appear first as a well organised emotion vitally connected with the maintenance of life. It is not improbable that but for the predominant play of the fear-instinct in the primitive mind the polydæmonistic form of religion might not have developed, but it does not thereby preclude the possibility of another form of religion developing in its place.

A question may arise here: Is not the sex-instinct as primitively organised as the fear-instinct, and does it not in any way act in the primitive religions? The sex-theory seems to have first advanced in a spirit of contempt for or hostility to religion and it was then opposed by William James in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*. But the Freudian school has later ably laid bare the sexual tendencies as working in religion. Of course it is difficult to refute the Freudian doctrine altogether, but it can not be a universal principle for all religion.

At least polydæmonistic religion is not the type of religion which had its origin in a loving reverence for known gods, but on the contrary it began with a vague fear of unknown powers; it is really an attempt to propitiate in dread the evil spirits which represent the most important functions and interests of groups. For awe is the distinguishing mark of this religion. Benevolent spirits were more or less unknown to the primitive people. In the *Origin of Civilisation* by Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock) there is quoted the opinion expressed by Scheinfurth: 'Among the Bougos of Central Africa good spirits are quite unrecognised'. The tendency seems to be that good spirits, being good, will do them good of themselves just as evil spirits do them harm unsolicited. So the primitive people entered into definite relations first with the evil spirits.(1)

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(1) In Indian mythology two classes of Gods are found—one being in the form of animals and the other of men. The animal-shaped deities such as Manasa,

It is only after the gradual development of religious life that the substitution of love for fear may be marked, such as has been occurred in Christianity, Buddhism and other religions. The sex-element even though not actually a factor in Polydæmonism, can not be said to be entirely absent from all religious practices of the primitive people. For the cult of the phallus, the sacred prostitution, and rites of varying degrees of obscenity, prevailed in all primitive civilisations. The deification of carnal love is prevalent still in higher civilisations.

In conclusion we have to observe that Fear, which worked so predominantly in Animistic conceptions does not seem to have been shorn of its entire influence over the religious life of modern civilised people. Dr. Starbusk has pointed out in his statistical inquiry into religious conversion that the central fact in the pre-conversion state is always the sense of sin. And the strong back-ground for the sense of sin is well furnished by fear. Again, referring to storm and stress experiences he says, "Fear comes earliest as was also true in the study of conversion;...The sense of sin is next and comes earlier than the feeling of incompleteness." According to Buddhism life becomes a study of destruction of all desire and effort and interest whatsoever. But is there not a fear-element (such as the apprehension of peril to the soul) involved in the complete surrender of the joys of earth? Does not the feeling of fear in regard to physiological cravings become the only incentive for the ascetics or *bhikshus* to adopt extravagant measures that tend to kill the very life they would protect? Do not the horrid pictures of hell and the increased religious tendency in old age point to the same fact?

So Professor Watson remarks "I think an examination of the psychological history of people will show that their behaviour is much more easily controlled by fear stimuli than by love; if the fear element were dropped out of any religion that religion would not survive a year."

Narasingha and others were first worshipped in dread of their evil doings. But the anthropomorphic forms of the deities were later conceptions. So it seems that unless there was no personification of the deity love was hardly an element in the divine worship.

## THE MUHAMMADAN POETS OF HINDI

By CHAMUPATI.

Muhammed Husain Azad has, by means of his 'Ab-i-Hayat, immortalized a number of Urdu poets. Had he, under every epoch, named a few Hindus, whose share in the making of modern Urdu was no less remarkable than that of their Muslim compeers, says a Muhammadan writer, the antagonism which the Hindus display to this language could have been averted at the very outset. Without expressing any opinion about this statement we are satisfied to find that the Misra brothers, the joint historians of Hindi literature have not been guilty of a similar omission.

Poetry to us appears to be the natural effusion of a deeply sentimental soul through the agency of a language which the poet finds ready to hand. In the choice of his medium he is the least influenced by considerations of religion. The language which he finds spoken about him and which, in the impressionable years of his scholastic career, has imbued his mental atmosphere, is generally the vehicle for the expression of his poetic thought,—with a genuine poet the least controllable of all his thoughts. Real poetry shuns being given an artificial garb in the shape of religion-determined wording. Poets with a mastery of more than one language are rare. Their masterpieces are written in words which flow out of their heart simultaneously with the poetic frenzy which is born therein.

The career of the Hindi language, studied dispassionately, shows that it has been an indigenous growth natural to the soil. Indians, both Hindu and Muhammedan, have immortalized their poetic impulses through the instrumentality of this language of the land.

Chand, the court bard of Prithiviraj, is the first-known poet of Hindi. He belonged to Lahore, whereby the honour of giving birth to the Hindi Chaucer,—whose *Prithiviraj Raso* possesses a high poetic merit which ranks him with the greatest poets of

other languages of his time,—falls to the lot of the Punjab. Among his contemporaries we find Masud who was born about 1123 A.D. and Kutab Ali who flourished about the beginning of the eleventh century. The latter is said to have submitted a petition in verse to Maharaja Jai Singh of Anhalvara lamenting that his mosque had been demolished by the people, whereupon the Raja sanctioned money from his treasury for its rehabilitation. How sweet his Hindi composition must have seemed to this devout Muslim, when that lost house of God was restored to its original magnificence through the beneficent influence of his muse?

In the thirteenth century figures 'Amir Khusro, whose Persian sonnets are ranked among the classic gems of Persian. Hindi appears to have been his mother tongue. He wrote a Persian Hindi dictionary in verse, called *Khaliq Bari*, from the first Persian word which he affectionately translated as *Sirjanhar*. Some of his love poems contain, like the stanzas of this dictionary, lines worded half in Persian and half in Hindi. The two halves fit in perfectly with each other,—an evidence of his masterly familiarity with the idiomatic usages of both the languages. In homely, everyday Hindi are cloaked his riddles which he propounds in simple easy verses.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century lived Kutban Shaikh who wrote a love story, *Mrigavati*, in verse. Husain Shah, the father of Sher Shah Sur was his patron, from which it is easy to judge how Muhammedans of the time loved and supported masters of Hindi. Simultaneously with him appears to have flourished the well known author of *Padmavati*, Muhammed Khan Jaisi, who chose for his subject the story of the immortal Rajput queen, Padmini. His narrative is full of lengthy accounts of places, persons, and events, from which the reader gets a vivid picture of the conditions of the country and the manner of social and political life at the time. Like an orthodox Muslim he begins his book with praise of God and the Prophet, and the four *imams*. A Muslim of Muslims in religion, he is in language and sentiment an Indian of Indians.

The reign of Akbar in India corresponded to the reign of Elizabeth in England. The regime of both the monarchs was

marked with unprecedented progress in the literature of their respective countries. English produced its Shakspeare and Hindi its Tulsi Das in that prolific era of public prosperity and peace. Akbar himself attempted the composition of Hindi verse. Abul Fazal and Faizi, both gems of versatile lustre, endeavoured sometimes to express themselves in the mellifluous language of the poets of the country. The most renowned of Akbar's *Nava-Ratna* was Abdul Rahim, who though a commander of the forces was also a rare literary genius. His *Dohas* are in poetic merit second only to those of Bihári. His couplets on morality and have passed into proverbs. His knowledge of Pauranic legends is evidenced by his apt reference to Indian myths in his pithy stanzas. For instance, writes he :

*Thoro kiye baren kī bart̃ barāī hoy,*  
*Jyon Rahīm, Hanumant ko Giridhar kahe na yoy.*

The great are praised much even for their small deeds, as Hanuman (though he too lifted a mountain) is not (like Krishna) called Giridhar.

*Rahiman māngat baren kī laghutā hōt anūp*  
*Bali mākh māngan Hari gaye, dhari bāvan ko rūp.*

Rahiman ! even great men, when they beg, are reduced to strange smallness. Hari when he went a-begging to the yajña of Bali, had to assume the form of a dwarf.

Nor did Rahiman remain insensible to the charms of Indian heroes of popular love legends :

*Tain Rahim, man apno kīno chāru chakōr,*  
*Nīsi bāsar lāgyo rahe Krishn Chandr kī or.*

Thou, Rahiman, hast made thy heart a longing *chakor*, which day and night keeps thinking of Krishn Chandr (lit. the moon in the person of Krishna).

In Ras Khan this love of Krishna reaches its high water mark. A Pathan living in Delhi, he is reported to have fallen in love with a banker lad. Overhearing the talk of some Vaishnavas, anent this erotic aberration of Ras Khan, whose infatuation, they said, would be better employed in devotion to



Vishnu, he became inquisitive as to what the latter was. A glance at the picture of Sri Krishna made him a Vaishnavite, and his poems, both in the *Prem-bátiká*, written in 1614, and in the *Suján Ras Khan* are steeped in a spirit of pure love. How deep is the attachment he cherishes for Braj, the land of Krishna's boyhood, may be inferred from the following lines :

*Mánuṣ haun to vahi Ras Khán Basaun Braj Gokul gánu gauvāran,  
Jo pasu haun to kaha bas mero charaun vahi Nand ki Dhenu*

*Manjhāran.*

*Páhan haun to vahi giri ko jo, banyo Braj chhatr Purandar káhan,  
Jo khag haun to baserá karaun vahi Kálindi Kál Kadamb ki dāran.*

If man, Ras Khan, I will dwell among the rustics of Gokul in Braj,  
If beast, how can I resist the temptation to graze among the cows of  
Nand,

If a stone, I would belong to that mountain which canopied Braj  
against the wrath of Indra,

If a bird, I would nestle among the twigs of a Kadamb tree on the  
bank of the Jumna.

Usman wrote his *Chitravatī* in 1613, Nur Muhammed his *Indravatī* in 1743, and Kasim his *Hans Javāher* about 1840, all these love tales being composed in imitation of Jaisi's *Padmāvatī*. *Indravatī* borrows the very style of Jaisi. It is profuse in its descriptions and depicts a portrait of the period in which it was composed.

Some poets had made themselves familiar with the technique of Indian erotic poetry, and of the Hindu science of love and æsthetics. Mubarak, in 1623, wrote a century of stanzas about each feature of female beauty, *e.g.*, tresses moles, etc. Tahir, in 1621, composed his *Koksár*. Kadir Bakhsh (b. 1578) has left his stray love-stanzas which are highly appreciated. So too are the *Yamak-shatak* of Abdul Rahman (1706) and the beautiful alliterative verses of Mahbub (1704).

Alam and Shaikh are remembered for the romance which marked their marriage. The former, a Brahman, sent his turban for dying to the latter, a Muhammadan dyer-woman. A piece of paper on which was written a line to which another remained to be added to complete the couplet, was by mistake left

fastened in the turban. Shaikh saw it and completed the stanza. Alam was so enamoured of the poetic excellence of her line that he forthwith became Muhammadan and took her to wife. The stanzas that have remained of the passionate couple are all erotic, in which line they are examples of exquisite poetic composition.

Says Shaikh :

Rati ran vise je rahe hain pati sanmukh,  
 Tūhen baksts bakst hai main vihani ke,  
 Karan ko kankan urojan ko chandhār,  
 Kati mānhi kankani rahe hai ati laske,  
 Sekh kahe ānan ko ādar son dīno pān,  
 Nainan-men kājar birāje man basike,  
 Ere bairi bār ye rahe hain pīthi pāchhe  
 Tamte bār bār bāndhati haun bār bār kas ke.

Those that have been in the front of the battle of love, I am rewarding with prizes, smiling :

To my hands I have given bangles, to my breast a necklace, round my waist hangs the shining *kankani*.

Sheikh says, to my mouth I have given the betel, to my eyes ravishing collyrium.

But my treacherous tresses—ah! they remained behind my back. I am therefore fastening them tight, again and again and yet again.

Of royal poets we have already noticed one : Akbar himself. Pathan Sultan, the ruler of Rajgarh in Bhopal, was another. He lived about 1704.

Taj was a Punjabi poetess. Her language is a mixture of Braj and Punjabi. She appears in her sentiment to have been another Mirābāi. Her poems overflow with love of the Cowherd of Gokula, whom she longs to see and adore. Born a Muhammadan, she will live, says she, a Hindu.

In spite of the communal antagonism of modern days which, strange as it may seem, has made itself felt in the field of literature and poetry also, seeking to set apart Hindi for the Hindus, and Urdu for the Moslems, we are not even to-day without a Latafat-Husain who writes his lays in choicest Braj.

As we have said, it is impossible to earmark particular languages for poets belonging to particular communities. Poetry is in fact a wider conception than can be encompassed by a particular clime or creed. It is a profound palpitation of the human heart, the appeal of which naturally overpasses political and parochial boundaries. The poet is true to himself only when he voices the sentiment of broader and deeper humanity. The lingual forms which that sentiment assumes have a necessity to be borrowed from the geographical surroundings which have given his poetry birth, or he would appear an exotic in his native land. His inspiration must be in tune with nature, if it be derived from the mountains and streams, the flowers and foliage, the notes of beasts and birds, that are his physical and mental companions. The Muhammedan poets that love Krishna with the ardour of Vaishnavas do not on that account apostatise from Islam.

Krishna, to the love poet of India, is simply a symbol. In him the votary adores not a particular hero of Indian history, but a human image which the lover lost in love has out of his fancy created. The innocent babe playing on his flute amid the charming sylvan scenery on the banks of the Jumna has ravished the heart of the lover, whether man or woman. Genuine love being a feminine sentiment, the infatuated lover has assumed the rôle of a milk maid. So long as the fact of the infancy of the beloved babe is borne in mind, there is no possibility of any deviation into immorality. The moment this fundamental feature of Krishna's beauty is forgotten, there is a fall in the moral mentality of the adorer.

Taj and Ras Khan appear to us to have been in love with the Indian spirit of spiritual affection. True to Islam in its essence, they are right Indian in their poetic devotion. The poetry of Jaisi and Rahiman is undoubtedly an immortal treasure of Hindi. Their themes are Indian, but the feeling that runs through them is a cosmopolitan heart-beat to which the heart-strings of even the Arab Bedouin must of necessity respond. Of them the Hindu is as proud as the Indian Musalman, as they form an imperishable part of their common Indian culture.

**THE MESSAGE**

No rent is made there in the mist  
by the doubtful dawn.  
No struggling streak of light comes through  
to gild our cage of gloom.  
Yet do not wail with us in pity,  
bird whose wings are free,  
But soar above conspiring clouds  
and cry : I see the sun !

**Rabindranath**

# VISVA-BHARATI BULLETIN.

## I.

Dwijendranath Tagore.

[*Read at the Brahmasamaj-Sammilani, Dacca.*]

BY PROF. CARLO FORMICHI.

At the dawn of Tuesday the nineteenth of last January, Dwijendranath Tagore entered the eternal rest at the age of eighty-seven. No death was ever, more than his, the expression of the close of a life of holiness. Hardly a pang, a complaint, could be noticed by the faithful disciple who was ministering to him: sleep became immortal in such a way as to show that between life and death there is no breaking off, no divorce, no loss, no antinomy; but, rather, a continuation, an alliance, a profit,—a harmonious integration. The whole Asram of Santiniketan was in a stir at the news; for *Boro Dada*, as they used to call the Poet's elder brother, was highly revered and deeply loved by everyone.

Throughout the whole of his life he had a great passion for philosophy, and succeeded in being a true philosopher. He was the first in Bengal to study, comment upon and unfold Kant's *Kritikder reinen und der praktischen Vernunft*. Even for Europeans the two treatises of the philosopher of Koenigsberg are far from being easily intelligible, and it is a wonder to see how Dwijendranath Tagore could plunge into the heart's core of those two more celebrated than commonly understood philosophical attempts at sharply fixing the limits between what may and may not be grasped by the human intellect; between, namely, science and religion.

Not only Kant, but German philosophy altogether roused the keen interest of the Bengali Sage, who being of a family of geniuses left to his younger brothers and nephews the gift for poetry, music, painting and literary achievements of every kind, and reserved for himself the gift of speculation. He wanted to represent in his family the philosopher, the Sage; and being really a Sage, he enjoyed the authority of a spiritual guide over his younger brothers. He dearly loved Rabindranath whom he considered more as a son than as a brother, owing, perhaps, to the great difference of age; and I am told that Dwijendranath was the only person who refused

to change his attitude towards his brother in spite of his triumph as a poet all over the world. He continued to treat him as a boy ; and it was touching as well as most amusing to hear from his mouth expressions towards the great Poet which were lacking respect as much as they contained love. The two brothers loved each other dearly.

Western philosophy could by no means satisfy Dwijendranath's mind and soul. According to him philosophy had to be lived as a reality ; it had to be experienced as something quite definite and conclusive. In an interview that I was privileged to have with him, I felt the touch of a lofty personality that impressed on me the deepest sense of reverence. A beautiful old man, very like Rabindranath in figure, was sitting on an armchair in the simplest of rooms, on the walls of which lizards were quite confidently climbing up and down. I was at once reminded of what Yeats writes in his Introduction to the English translation of *Gitanjali* ; namely, that the squirrels had no hesitation in mounting on the writing-table of the Bengali philosopher, and sometimes even on his very arms and shoulders. All kinds of beasts, even the most timid, felt quite secure near him ; and they were right in feeling so, because he protected them on all occasions, as may be proved by numberless instances that his relatives report.

"German philosophy is deep as well as highly interesting," Dwijendranath said after he had kindly expressed to me the warmest feelings of sympathy for Italy, my country ; "but," he added, "German philosophy has not come to any positive conclusion ; and, therefore, I prefer Indian philosophy which never fails to be conclusive. Take, for instance, the Upanishads ; I myself have experienced many of the things expounded therein. Do not apply to the pandits in order to understand the Upanishadic lore ; they will not be able to give you any clue to it. I can help you much better, for I have experienced it."

I was as spell-bound at these words, and looking at the piercing eyes of the Sage, I felt as if I was living thousands of years ago in the good old times of *rishis* and prophets. We consider ourselves lucky and happy whenever we dig out of the soil an ancient gold or silver or brass coin ; we are awe-stricken before the remains of an old temple or pillar ; and it is easy to imagine how almost crushed I felt in the living presence of a genuine Upanishadic seer. After all, a human soul is the most precious thing in the whole range of Nature, and India especially has got the privilege of preserving and offering to humanity not only old coins and temples, but pure holy souls that are faithful successors of the

wonderful ancient saints who from the far-away land of the past beacon to us, who sail on the stormy waves of the present age, and show us the path to salvation.

Dwijendranath Tagore was an ancient seer living in the twentieth century.

I am told that his notes on the Bhagavadgītā are a most valuable and original contribution to the understanding of the text. It seems that he had a theory of his own concerning the three *gunas*, the constituents of *prakṛiti*, and that the whole Sāṅkhya-system will find an enlightening commentary as soon as the manuscripts of the sage find their way through the press. A publication that should comprise all Dwijendranath's writings would be most welcome and would fill many volumes, for during his long life the Sage's philosophical and literary activity never stopped and was simply stupendous. He started, also, as it is well known, an important Review that kept alive for many years the spiritual and intellectual interests in Bengal and in the rest of India.

On the very eve of his peaceful death, Dwijendranath composed a brief poem that he read to his friends there, at Santiniketan. He was also reading with eagerness Corresio's introduction to the Rāmāyana, that I was translating from Italian into English, just to please him. That he was a true philosopher is evidenced also by the unfitness he showed for all practical and worldly transactions. So far as money was concerned, he was just like a child, and one had sedulously to defend him from being cheated. As flies run where honey is, so poor as well as designing people were always surrounding him. He could never deny assistance and help.

A man, who was in want of money, once called on him under pretence of discussing a philosophical point. The end of the visit betrayed his true aim: the man asked for money. Dwijendranath chancing to have no money at hand was ready to part with a tricycle that had cost him five hundred rupees, in order to give the man the opportunity of getting fifty rupees by its sale. The disastrous bargain was avoided only by the timely intervention of one of his relatives. On another occasion he divested himself of a woollen garment, in order to keep warm a servant who, according to him, was not dressed so as to be efficiently defended from the rigours of the cold season. This also was a liberality practised at his own expense, for when he went to bed, he, for the night at least, had nothing warm enough to replace it.

I am reporting these details because I am convinced that, far from

being idle, they allow us to have before our eyes the figure of the Sage just as it was during his most edifying life.

Yes, Dwijendranath Tagore's figure is and will ever be before our eyes, because life in his hands was a chisel that did not engrave on sand or water, as it so often is with men, but on gold that knows no tarnishing, no wear.

## II.

### Farewell Address to Prof. Carlo Formichi

BY THE FOUNDER-PRESIDENT.

DEAR FRIEND,

The happy time of our meeting in Santiniketan, in the atmosphere of rich leisure and peaceful co-operation, has at last come to its end, and your departure from our midst draws near. The very few weeks that you have been able to give us contain in them a full harvest of friendship that in the normal course of things would require the sunshine of a life-time to mature. I know that our scholars here, with whom you worked, and who have come to appreciate heartily the value of the help you rendered and of the kindness you showed to them, will always remember you with grateful admiration. Your scholarship has most impressed us for its living and luminous quality of imagination; we have realised that your study of Indian culture does not merely reveal a scientific mind, but a personality full of sympathetic insight. Having the noble modesty of the truth-seeker, your unbiassed mind could come into intimate touch with the ideal India, with all that is immortal in her of beauty and truth. Your discriminate appreciation has helped our students in directing their loyalty to the best that India has achieved in her intellectual and spiritual adventures,—loyalty which is needed for the building up of a fruitful future on the promise of a fertile past.

In your own nature you have brought to us a gift which is not merely an outcome of a studious, scholarly training, but something native to the kindly soil of your mother country. It is that generosity of heart which has the magic power of bidding open the door of the inner sanctum of an alien race. I shall always remember the happiness of those days which we shared together when profuse welcome was lavished upon us by the springtime in the eastern districts of our province, when all along our path we were repeatedly roused by the loud greetings of colour from the



extravagant *kinsukas*, from the *asoka* groves, blossoming with wistful reminiscences of a far-away lyric age in India. It made me feel proud of your companionship when I realised how easily your own accommodating kindness found its way into the hospitality of our people, across the natural boundaries of unaccustomed habits and manners.

Your arrival in our *āśrama* was accompanied by the gift of an Italian library from your country, surprising in its magnificence. It has already aroused in our students a desire to honour it by owning it truly, thereby directly reaching that great source of inspiration which, in a period of new birth in European history, brought out such a variegated luxuriance of intellect and art on the western continent. This library has been a generous invitation to our people by your country to the feast of soul in that guest-house of hers which is open to all time and to all humanity.

You were a worthy bearer of this message from your own land.; but being a true lover of India, you must also act as messenger on our behalf in carrying our assurance to Italy that this friendly beckoning of hers has given a permanent direction to our mind in its communication with herself. And all this is in accord with the ideal of Visva-bharati which, as you know, is to realise the freedom of pathway along the vast realm of man, widening our consciousness of the unity of spirit in the different human races. Your genial presence among us, the valuable service you have rendered to our *asrama*, the precious token of sympathy you brought to us from your country and the masterly exposition you gave us of the gradual course of the spiritual illumination running through the period of Vedic India, has greatly strengthened our cause, creating a strong link with Italy in our bond of human solidarity.

In this connection I must mention the name of your former pupil, Dr. Tucci, who is still with us and for the loan of whose services I cannot enough thank your government. He has studied with an amazing comprehensiveness, along with most of the other phenomena of ancient Indian culture, the greatest period of India's history; he has pursued the triumphant career of Buddhism in distant countries, following almost obliterated indications across the sand-buried antiquities, among the records of a startled history that has lost the memory of its own language. He can best remind the modern children of India of what has been the most glorious self-revelation in the annals of their ancestors. That was her ideal of universal sympathy,—made uniquely real in the relationship which India at one time established with the neighbouring and distant countries

through her self-conquering messengers, unarmed and unafraid, without greed and devoid of material means,—the ideal which urged one of her mightiest emperors in the heyday of his power to transfer the progress of his conquest and the expansion of his empire from the political to the moral plane.

It is our desire to proclaim this richest birth-right of ours as Indians, our faith in this *dharma* which enjoins every man to realise, through the cultivation of *maitri*, the truth of his own self in the Truth which dwells in the All. You who come as a voice from across the seas giving harmony to the voice of the Eternal in the aspiration of India, you who allow us to realise in yourself the spiritual kinship of love and disinterested service,—you have helped us in this dark age of international suspicion and jealousy to light our lamp, which is dedicated to the divine spirit of *maitri*, acknowledged by Visva-bharati as the true ideal of India. And, therefore, our farewell to-day contains within it the deeper silent welcome of all days to our world of endeavour which will always carry in its heart the memorial of the best that your own life has offered to its creation.

Before we part, allow me to say that my relation with you is not merely through the cause I cherish in our institution. It is warmly personal and is intimately associated with my love for Italy and with the exuberant welcome which I received from her. If, owing to my increasing weakness and ill-health, I am prevented from claiming her hospitality ever again, her touch will always remain with me in the many relics of our meeting and the permanent representation you leave behind in the *asrama* of the treasure of her thoughts and dreams, and of the large-heartedness of her people.

### III.

#### Prof. Formichi's Parting Address.

King of poets,—my friends,

If my departure should mean a breaking off of my relations with Visvabharati, this hour would be the saddest in my life, for it would imply a last farewell to persons that I most revere and dearly love and to intellectual and spiritual interests that have become one of my highest and most cherished aims for the rest of the years I have still to live.

No, this my departure is not an end: it is a beginning; it is not a sunset: it is a sunrise: it is not a farewell in the sense of our Italian

*addio*, but rather a welcome to the starting of a most active and intimate collaboration for the achievement of our common ideals.

I am going to Rome in order to prepare for Rabindranath Tagore a reception that has to assume the greatest cultural importance. This great man of yours, that nations vie with each other in glorifying, must find in Italy his second fatherland. Among nations Italy must be for Rabindranath his last love. It is commonly said that the first love is always the sweetest. It is an error : the sweetest love is the last one. The visit *Gurudev* intends paying to Rome and to other Italian cities is, therefore, full of hopeful possibilities.

I am going to Rome, then, in order to secure that Tucci's mission may be prolonged as long as possible. Besides the interest roused in Santiniketan for the Italian language and literature, a whole programme has been devised of Buddhist researches on the basis principally of Tibetan and Chinese texts. The alliance of the young gifted Italian scholar with the eminent pundit Vidhusekhara Śāstri and his disciples is likely to make of Santiniketan the first centre in the world for Buddhist studies. In the months that I have lectured at Santiniketan I had the incomparable satisfaction of seeing the ultimate results of my studies on the development of Indian thought from the Rigveda down to Buddhism, unanimously approved by such distinguished scholars as Vidhusekhara Śāstri, Kshitimohan Sen, and other learned pundits. The ten lectures will appear in the Visva-bharati Quarterly and then in a volume. A dearer bond cannot be imagined between Visvabharati and myself. My lessons, moreover, on the Buddhacharita have induced the pupils that followed them, to give India a new and more connected edition of Asvaghosha's masterpiece. And this is another bond between Visvabharati and myself. While I shall be in Rome the seeds I have sown in the most fertile soil of Santiniketan will gradually grow into plants that will bear blossoms and fruits, and never will sower experience more affectionate and tender anxiety than I for the ripening of his seeds.

You are, perhaps, eager to know what I think about your institution and the improvements of which, according to me, it is still susceptible.

I have already expressed my opinion on Visvabharati in a speech I delivered at Dacca and which I shall hand over for publication to the eminent Editor of the Modern Review, Ramananda Chatterjee. I am glad to have expressed that opinion before I received in Santiniketan the farewell of both teachers and disciples. The farewell-ceremony was full of

such deep gratitude and of such sincere and spontaneous love, that I was needs moved unto tears. After that ceremony I feel I can no longer be impartial towards Visvabharati. I have become partial, I look at all your concerns with the eye of a lover. Therefore, it was a lucky thing that I said about Visvabharati what I had to say, while I was still in the mood of an objective and impartial observer.

Dear friends, I thank you all heartily for having called me to India. You have allowed me to insert in the history of my life the most interesting pages, which tell, also, of my most intense joys and satisfactions. The peaceful work in the *āśrama* at Santiniketan ; the privilege of being near the Poet, of listening to his inspired words and of enjoying the touch of his lofty personality ; the acquaintance made of so many high souls among teachers and disciples ; the gorgeous sunrises and sunsets and the most suggestive landscapes inviting in West Bengal to religious meditation and in East Bengal to a kind of intoxicated passion for earth, water, plants and beasts ; the simplicity of Indian life and the bounty of the people ; Indian customs and ceremonies faithful to a remote, venerable past ; the glory of the ruins of Sarnath and the unique charm of holy Benares ; these, and so many other impressions I am going to entrust to a book which has to contain the best of my heart and of my soul.

I thought the farewell-ceremony in Santiniketan had closed the manifestation of friendly feelings towards me. But, here in Calcutta, you representatives of Visvabharati, are honouring me again in the most flattering way. Especially your words, *Gurudev*, confer on my life a price I should never have anticipated before, and I devoutly hope that my Mother from heaven may hear them and bless me.

What I wish you, cannot be expressed through words : they would certainly spoil the depth and sincerity of the admiration devotion and love you inspired in me ever since the first day I had the privilege of coming near you. This only I can say, that when I am near you, I feel nearer God.

#### IV.

#### Visva-bharati.

By PROF. G. TUCCI.

In a Mahāyāna Buddhist text it is said that once Buddha, absorbed in the meditative calm of *śamādhi*, projected from his divine heart a luminous ray which embraced the worlds and filled with light and maitrī the

suffering and struggling creatures. And a thrill of joy ran through the souls, weapons were laid down, hate was quenched, love smiled forth its blessing.

This parable, which has a profound significance, teaches that love is not possible without purification and consecration of the spirit. First it is necessary to merge our ephemeral and illusory personality—of the petty individual of contingent life,—in that wider individuality which is no longer the antagonism of individual against individual, but a fusion of all the *egos* in a superior synthesis. Only thus may our true being find its significance, its justification, and enable us to love without distinction or limitation, to diffuse our spiritual wealth which has its joy only in giving.

From Santiniketan, which was the Maharshi's retreat for meditation, Visvabharati had to come.

Visva-bharati is not a mere research institute, albeit one of the highest value. Though as a devoted and zealous priest of science, I cannot help admiring the precious library which it is gradually collecting, the everyday work of research which is accomplished in the serene, austere silence of its halls, the rare learning of the professors who flock to it from every part of India and of Europe,—none the less I should be doing injustice to *Gurudev* if I only devote my attention to the scientific value of the Institution.

Science is not wisdom : she speaks to the intellect, not to the heart : we all know men of superior intelligence who are unable to hear or understand the harmonies of art or poetry ; who fail to be touched by the mystery of the night that watches over us with its myriad of stars, who are deaf to the ineffable voice with which Nature speaks to us through her dawn and her sunset. In our education there is an opposition between the spiritual and the intellectual life,—an antimony that we cannot solve and from which is derived that tragic unrest which dominates our modern culture. And in the void of our life we feel sometimes, with deep anguish, the admonition of Sanatkumāra to Nārada ; our heart echoes the rebuke of Hamlet that there are more things in the world than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

Visva-bharati seeks to put into practice the fusion and the interpenetration of intellect and heart ; for no idea is full or perfect until it reaches its realisation in practice. Our children learn formulas and precepts and schemes, and meanwhile live their lives subject to the tyranny of such programme under the severe discipline of their masters. But never does

the tree love freedom more than when it is young. Never is the heart more full of joy than when it is simple.

Laotze says that the great sages, the perfect men, are like children and therefore they alone can understand children. *Gurudev* caught the cry of sorrow of childhood suffering from a system of education which was nourishing neither their mind nor their body ; and he came back to the educational ideal of ancient India, to that free school,—which reminds us of the humanistic school of Italy that grew and prospered round the *guru*,—wherein the individual is no longer subjected to an external will, or to the rigidity of a programme, annihilating personality within the dark uniformity of their generalisations, but which allows of an autonomous development of mind and spirit ; whereupon in the heart of the children is born that which alone can give life, namely *ānanda*.

Freedom and *ānanda* are the two fundamental principles of the educational ideal of Tagore : that is what he has put into practice in Visva-bharati, where the student is living his own life, not only in contact with books, but also with his own soul, and with Nature,—a nature infinitely serene as it is in Santiniketan, divinely eloquent in the solitude which inspired the meditations of the Maharshi. It is evident that, in this atmosphere, the teacher is no longer the disciplinarian master who imposes formulas and facts, but the friend and companion in the mutual realisation of the same ideals. This community of ideal is derived from the unity of inspiration which originates from the Poet himself, who represents the central point of the magic *mandala*, which is the creation of the *maitribalam*, the force of love that animates him.

There are some aspects of our personality which are too often neglected by the strictly scientific Western mentality. Art and music are the necessary complement of the instruction imparted in Visva-bharati. There it is not mere science which chains us to material facts,—it is the realm of art in which imagination and feeling are free to expand and where man no longer reflects but creates. Moreover we also find,—a thing rare with poets who are usually accounted dreamers,—the particular importance given by *Gurudev* to the Institution specially designed for practical service. I mean Sriniketan.

This Sriniketan is a marvellous institution, which if widely adopted should prove to be of the greatest utility to the Indian people. It represents the rehabilitation of the simple and industrious life of the fields, of the villages in which Indian civilisation grew and flourished.

healthy in body as well as spirit, threaten to destroy the country. Let us, therefore, come back to our fields, but furnished with the means which science supplies, in order that the soil can be made more fertile and respond with greater generosity to our loving care.

India needs food ; and, in order to obtain it, the agricultural system must be perfected. Sriniketan is an example which shows the path that should be followed, while representing at the same time a centre of cohesion and unity. An unhealthy individualism has come to reign destructively over communities and villages. It is necessary to diffuse the principle of co-operation, to teach hygienic rules, to struggle against malaria as well as against moral impurity. Mother Earth is generous in giving help to her children ; but she loves those best who take constant care of her. Prosperity she is not lavish of, but allows it to be gained by those who know how to work for it. Sriniketan represents the centre of this vital and fundamental idea. It is an expression of the far-seeing love of the poet for the children of his motherland.

Last but not least, Visva-bharati transcends India. You have a proof of this in our own presence here. Visva-bharati is the link of connexion between the Oriental and the Occidental worlds. Both those are great, but they do not yet love each other, because they do not understand each other. Each tries to live its own life, thus very often exaggerating those very characteristics which render more difficult all possibility of accord and collaboration. And for ourselves, let me frankly say that it is we, obsessed by the ephemeral illusion of the wonderful conquests of our science, who are too often obstinately forgetful of that wealth of greater value,—the eternal and the inalienable wealth of the spirit.

*Gurudev* is not an exclusivist. He wishes to bring the peoples into contact, because beyond and above the various peoples there is Humanity, there is Man, not an abstraction, but a living reality. And he seeks to realise this *rapprochement* through the world of culture. In Santiniketan you find representatives of all nations, from Japan to Italy, from Tibet to Holland. And you also find the beginnings of that collaboration which every man, who hopes for a better future for the world, looks forward to as an accomplished fact. Through the world of culture this reciprocal understanding has begun, without which reciprocal love is an impossibility.

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## SONG\*

By Rabindranath Tagore

In front lies the ocean of peace.  
Launch the boat, Helmsman.  
You will be the comrade ever,  
Take O take him in your lap,  
In the path of the Infinite  
will shine the *Dhruva-tara*.†  
Giver of Freedom, your forgiveness, your mercy  
Will be wealth inexhaustible in the eternal journey.  
May the mortal bonds perish,  
May the vast universe take him in its arms,  
And may he know in his fearless heart  
The Great Unknown.

\* The above is an English rendering by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty of the original Bengali song of which the first line is নক্ষত্র শান্তি-পারাবার . . . . The song was composed by the Poet on December 8, 1939, while he was conducting the rehearsals of a new stage version of his famous play *Dak-ghar* ( *The Post-Office* ). The song was intended to be sung by the Poet himself in the last scene after Amal's death. When the rehearsals were abandoned owing to the Poet's indisposition, he expressed the wish that the song should be used after his own death. It was accordingly never published and was sung for the first time at the Memorial Service in the Mandir at Santiniketan on 7 August, 1941.

† The bright Pole-star which in the Bengali word *Dhruva* carries the significance of steadfastness and unfailing guidance.

## LAST POEM\*

*By Rabindranath Tagore*

You have covered the path of your creation  
in a mesh of varied wiles,  
Thou Guileful One.

Deftly have you set a snare of false beliefs  
in artless lives.

With your deceit  
you have left your mark on Greatness  
taking away from him the secrecy of night.

The path your star lights for him  
is the translucent path of his heart,  
ever illumined by a simple faith.

Though tortuous outside  
it is straight within,  
that is his pride.

Though men call him futile,  
in the depth of his heart he finds truth  
washed clean by the inner light.

Nothing can cheat him ;  
he carries to his treasure-house  
his last reward.

He who casefully could bear your wile,  
receives from your hands  
the right to everlasting Peace.

\* The original Bengali poem ( ভাবার হৃদয় পথ . . . ) the very last composed by him, of which the above is an English rendering, was dictated by the Poet a few hours before his operation in the morning of 30th July, 1941. He was not, however, satisfied with it and expressed a desire to revise it afterwards. This desire was never fulfilled.

## A LETTER FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*From*

Jawaharlal Nehru,  
District Jail,  
Dehra Dun.

*August 27, 1941.*

*To*

Krishna Kripalani,  
Santiniketan, Bengal.

My dear Krishna,

Just a month ago you wrote to me and soon after I received the Tagore Birthday Number of the Visva-Bharati Quarterly. I liked this Birthday Number very much and some of the pictures and articles were good.

How long ago it all seems ! People must die some time or other and Gurudeva could not have lived much longer. And yet his death came as a grievous shock to me and the thought that I would never see his beautiful face and hear his gentle voice again oppressed me terribly. Ever since I came to prison this thought had haunted me. I wanted to see him once again so much. Not that I had anything special to say to him, and certainly I had no desire to trouble him in any way. Perhaps the premonitions that I was not fated to see him again itself added to this yearning.

However, all that is over and, instead of sorrow, let us rather congratulate ourselves that we were privileged to come in contact with this great and magnificent person. Perhaps it is as well that he died when he was still pouring out song and poem and poetry—what amazing creative vitality he had ! I would have hated to see him fade away gradually. He died, as he should, in the fullness of his glory.

I have met many big people in various parts of the world. But I have no doubt in my mind that the two biggest I have had the privilege of meeting have been Gandhi and Tagore. I think

they have been the two outstanding personalities in the world during the last quarter of a century. As time goes by, I am sure this will be recognised, when all the generals and field marshals and dictators and shouting politicians are long dead and largely forgotten.

It amazes me that India in spite of her present condition ( or is it because of it ? ) should produce these two mighty men in the course of one generation. And that also convinces me of the deep vitality of India and I am filled with hope, and the petty troubles and conflicts of the day seem very trivial and unimportant before this astonishing fact—the continuity of the idea that is India from long ages past to the present day. China affects me in the same way. India and China : how can they perish ?

There is another aspect which continually surprises me. Both Gurudeva and Gandhiji took much from the west and from other countries, especially Gurudeva. Neither was narrowly national. Their message was for the world. And yet both were 100 % India's children, and the inheritors, representatives and expositors of her age-long culture. How intensely Indian both have been, in spite of all their wide knowledge and culture ! The surprising thing is that both of these men with so much in common and drawing inspiration from the same wells of wisdom and thought and culture, should differ from each other so greatly ! No two persons could probably differ so much as Gandhi and Tagore !

Again I think of the richness of India's age-long cultural genius which can throw up in the same generations two such master-types, typical of her in every way, yet representing different aspects of her many-sided personality.

My love to you and Nandita,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## A STUDENT'S MEMORIES OF GURUDEV

G. Ramachandran

MEMORIES, priceless beyond all words, illumine my mind. In this moment, not of sorrow or pain, but of wonder and perplexity, these memories come upon me and envelop me like streams of light. I will not shed a tear. I will not give a sigh. That today will be unforgivable profanity. It is not sighs and tears that the great passing-away of Gurudev calls forth from us. That is the common thing every common death calls for. But Gurudev was not a common man. He did not live a common life. He has not died a common death. In the *Gitanjali* several years ago when life was yet young with him he had asked himself, "What will you offer to death when Death comes and knocks at your door?" He had answered with marvellous and noble vision, "Oh ! I will place before him the full and overflowing vessel of my life. I will never let him go with empty hands." And now in his eighty-first year with the whole world as his witness he has literally kept his word to death, that tremendous and inescapable fulfilment of all truly great lives. To most, death is only an end. It is a mere cutting-off. It is darkness after light. But to those like Rabindranath death is nothing but a resplendent fulfilment. For such, it has no sting whatever. Death comes to them like fruitioning after flowering. The flowering may be full of enchanting scents and exquisite colourings, but in fruitioning is the more precious and real substance of fulfilment. Gurudev has died only to be deathless. They say he is dead. I say he cannot die. Death as we ordinarily understand it stands defeated. Death as he understood it, as the friend and the fulfilment of life, stands proud and thrilled at the gift of immortality laid in its hands. "I will place before Death the full vessel of my life." He has now done that. Not a small, little, penurious, undeveloped or unrealised life has



he now placed in the hands of death. But a mighty, indescribably rich, varied and noble, fully-grown, all round, perfectly fulfilled, and radiant life has he placed before death. Is it any wonder then that Death itself stands awe-struck and humbled before the burden of blazing light it must now carry for ever in its hands. Therefore let us not weep or sorrow as for a common death. Let us rather rejoice. Let us be thankful that such a man lived so greatly in our time and has died in such a magnificent fulfilment. Let us understand at last what a fraud is the common concept of death and its terrors. Let us burn to ashes the earthly body from which the breath has fled, and scatter the ashes to the sun and the winds, knowing that each atom of it will leap up again like flaming torches, like great beams of deathless light. Let us then ignore death. Let us remember Gurudev's vast and incalculable legacies of dreams and thoughts and the countless forms of beauty he created in word and song, and the innumerable achievements in which he will live for ever. Not in some heaven or other unknown and unknowable place will he live for ever. He will live deathlessly here and in this great world, under this vast sky which he loved in all its moods and tones, in the midst of this endless and radiant Nature which he read like an open book, and above all in the minds of the millions of men and women who owed so much of their joy and their understanding to him, and in the minds of their children and children's children.

Every great man has his own special background which is partly historical and partly his own creation. It is against such a special background alone that we can see him at his best and greatest. For Rabindranath also there was such a vital background. That was Santiniketan. It was there that he blossomed to his fullness. It was there that his poems and songs rose in an increasing symphony of immortal beauty and immortal truth. It was there that he wove the patterns of his dynamic philosophy of the unity of mankind cutting across every obstacle

of race, nation, creed and caste. It was there that his vision of the Visva-bharati was born and nurtured. It is there that his ashes will now rest in peace for ever.

There is in Santiniketan a Sāl-avenue. It is to that avenue that my mind runs today. There, from the eastern end comes a royal figure. Not in any kingly robe or in any external decoration does the kingliness lie. It is there in his tall and majestic figure. Some Roman or Mughal emperor might have had such a figure. He approaches in simple flowing robes which cover him from head to foot. His hair is snow-white, and yet his gait is unbent and his walking firm. His hands are held behind his back. Even from the distance his broad brow rises like a great marble dome crowned by the Himalayan snows of his hair over his great shining eyes and his nobly moulded Aryan nose. There is such serenity flowing from him, such peace and self-possession, that you ask, "Is it some Maha Rishi of old, re-risen who is approaching?" And as he approaches slowly, you see a smile lighting up his whole face, his eyes glowing like stars. Boys and girls of Santiniketan greet him with bowed heads and folded hands. He has a smile and a kind word for everybody. But the little children do not stand away in reverence like the elders. They run to him shouting "Guru-dev !" and cluster round him in utter childlike irreverence. With the children he will crack joke after joke. There arise peals of laughter from among them in which his voice is that of the most glad-hearted of children. They lay hands on his robes and pull him till he consents to sit somewhere with them in the shade of some spreading tree. They ask him questions. He gives them answers which make them break into fresh peals of laughter. Then suddenly there is silence, for he is telling them a story or singing them a song. It is a magic circle. It is the Eden of children. Elder students and other men and women of Santiniketan come and sit round a little behind the children, and seeing them he will say laughingly, "Why are you here, you old people ? This is our, the children's, durbar." He was so much one of them !

Day after day he has come walking in serenity and in beauty down that Sāl-avenue. Day after day we used to greet him there and touch his feet and feel ennobled. That Sāl-avenue was so full of him in those great days. Those trees can never forget him ! They will miss him !

It was once a rainy day. There are no class rooms or lecture-halls worth the name in Santiniketan. The classes one morning started in passing sunshine. One class of little children was going on in the grove behind the library. The rain gently started without warning. The children did not want to break up the class. The teacher was hesitating. Suddenly there was an uproarious voice coming from the side of the library. Rabindranath was approaching with an armful of umbrellas, shouting, "An umbrella for a song, an umbrella for a song !" The children broke up the class at once. They ran to him joining in the fun. Gurudev had come to the library in the morning and seeing the rain start had gathered all the umbrellas in the library verandah without asking anybody's permission. And yet, it is this same glad-hearted and child-souled poet and prophet who has also given us the profoundest philosophy, and sorrowed deeply over the many tragedies of modern civilisation. This was twenty-one years ago.

Those were the first years after the Visva-bharati University was started at Santiniketan. Most of us, the first batch of students, were non-cooperators from various Government schools and colleges. Most of us were khadi-clad "Gandhi fanatics". I was the head of the gang in those days. Gurudev had in those days written some vigorous criticism of the Non-cooperation programme in the pages of the *Modern Review*. We were much agitated over it. We were sure Gurudev was wrong and Gandhiji right. We argued and shouted. Our classes became full of these wordy discussions. We made a nuisance of ourselves. The peace of Santiniketan was much



Photo by Sat, en Bisi  
August 1934 Jorasanli



disturbed by these controversies conducted with much heat. There was also of course a strong student group supporting Gurudev's views. One day I suddenly got a message from Gurudev. Professors had told him that I was leading the opposition. The message was to the effect that Gurudev was glad that plenty of discussions were going on, but that he preferred to have some light along with the heat of controversy, and that therefore he would advise a full debate, and that he also would attend the debate gladly. I confess I felt a little nervous. In any other institution I would perhaps have been suspended or even dismissed. But our Guru was asking for further and fuller discussion! That was his way with students. A big debate was arranged. Every student in Santiniketan attended. A motion was tabled : "In the opinion of this house Mahatma Gandhi's programme is the right one for India." I moved it before a crowded house. Our side let loose a flood of oratory. So did the other side. The late Sri Kali Mohan Ghosh thundered at us and defended the views of Gurudev with great vigour. Votes were taken. We won. Gurudev was all the time sitting apart behind the students. He appeared to enjoy the debate very much. He joined in the applause for and against the motion whenever it broke forth from the students. After the votes were taken Gurudev asked for permission to speak. And he spoke. When he spoke it was all light and no heat. He prefaced his talk by saying that the debate had given him great joy. "This Santiniketan will fail if it fetters your minds or makes you fear ideas. Even if every one of you hold an absolutely different view from mine, even so Santiniketan will still be your home. It will shelter you. Today is the day of my victory because my students have said today freely and bravely that I am hopelessly in the wrong. I do not admit that I am wrong. But I want you to have the courage to say so if that is your conviction. May Santiniketan always give you that freedom and courage!" He spoke for an hour. He pleaded against fanaticism. He did not admit that

non-cooperation would succeed. It was too negative. It had possibilities in certain directions. But it was tending towards the same narrow nationalism which in Europe had made civilisation into a mockery. It was impossible to reject entirely the progress of industrialism which was like a force of nature. Industrialism could and ought to be controlled but it cannot be erased. Mere asceticism will not lead to freedom. Freedom demanded clear understanding of objective realities and not only of moral values. Mahatma Gandhi was undoubtedly the greatest moral force in India, and hence the greater need to guard against his moral dictatorship.

Rightly did Mahatma Gandhi call Gurudev the "Great Sentinel." What nobler or more courageous Sentinel of the human spirit has India produced since Gautama Buddha 2500 years ago ! Gurudev's final words that night still ring in my ears. "Do not accept anything because I say so or because it is my view. Wrestle with these problems with your own power of reasoning. You must fearlessly reject my view if your reasoning does not agree with mine. That I am the head of this Institution gives me no right to enforce my ideas on you or to curtail your mental freedom. It is my duty in Santiniketan to guard the freedom of your mind as the most precious thing in the world. That is the mission of the Visva-bharati." Let us think for one moment of the thousands of Gurus all the world over seeking to bend the mind and will of others to their own mind and will through fear and coercion of every kind, and think also with our heads bowed in love and reverence unutterable of this great Guru Dev who taught us that the value of the freedom of the human mind was the greatest value under the sun. Never in all my life have I known a man with greater moral courage than Rabindranath. He had openly joined issues with Mahatma Gandhi on momentous occasions when the whole nation was being swept away by the magic of that super-man's resistless faith and matchless karma yoga. From his place as the "Great Sentinel" Rabindranath has protected the freedom of the mind in India against every attack.

There is one other memory which will also be of value. One of the last things I did before I left Visva-bharati was to read a paper entitled "Gandhi and Tagore". That paper contained the synthesis which I had built up in my own mind of Gandhi and Tagore after careful and prolonged study of both. The meeting took place in Uttarayana. Gurudev was also present. I think Dr. Formichi of the University of Rome who was then in Santiniketan presided. After I read my paper Dr. Formichi complimented me and turning to Gurudev asked, half jocularly and half seriously, "Now Gurudev, what have you to say on the paper?" Gurudev smiled and said, "Ramachandran has spoken of two persons, Gandhi and Tagore. Of the first I claim to know something, and of the second so little that I dare not speak about him. The Upaniṣads have said that he who knows himself knows every thing. I know very well that I do not know every thing. It follows therefore that I do not know myself." There was a round of laughter. Gurudev's sense of humour was something wonderful and his great voice would sometimes roll across Santiniketan in laughter of undiluted gladness and good humour.

I will close with the last conversation I had with him in his little beautiful mud-hut in Santiniketan, more beautiful than the palaces of kings, and yet simple like a hermitage. It was in 1939, I was on a visit to Santiniketan after several years. He asked me about my work. I told him that I had taken a plunge into politics, and gave him the story of the struggle for political freedom in Travancore. He said to me, "I always knew you could not keep away from these struggles. In a sense they are vital. In this new era in India our struggle is no longer for individual liberation only. It is also for social liberation, but these are not contradictory. One cannot exist without the other. That is the secret we must now learn. In the struggle for collective freedom, however, let us do nothing which will kill individual freedom. I am a profound admirer of Soviet Russia,



but I have a fear that individual freedom does not as yet blossom there. In your politics, never stoop to a lie. Never dishonour the man in us and never take a short cut to victory. Victory is nothing. But we must reach victory with honour, through honour. Put your trust in men, and not only in programmes. Our great leader in India, Mahatma Gandhi, is right there. We must win only through pure and honourable methods. There are two things you must carry with you everywhere as an old student of the Visva-bharati. Never give up the freedom of mind to friend or foe. Keep the windows of your mind open and free. Fanaticism is death to the human mind. And secondly, never think of any man, however little he might appear, as anything less than a man, a member of the great community of mankind, and never, never, as the member of a caste or a community or a nation or a race." I bowed my head and reverently touched his feet. His face as he laid his hand on my head shone with his affection for an old and humble student. I never saw that face again but its radiance will live with me till the end.

Gurudev is not dead. He cannot die. Let each one of us who lighted his or her little lamp at the mighty fountain-fire of his deathless soul contribute every day some little thing or other which would make that fire burn more and more bright in the years to come.

## LAST DAYS WITH GURUDEVA\*

By An Asramite

THOUGHTS and feelings crowd in upon me in a painful confusion as I look back over the last few weeks. It seems unbelievable that he from the warmth of whose presence we drew our inspiration, our strength, our joy, is no longer with us. We had taken that warmth for granted, as we take the warmth of the sun for granted—the sun after whom he was so appropriately named. Yet we knew that for all his god-like qualities, he was but mortal and would one day pass away ; but being too human ourselves, the knowledge that the end was inevitable has in no way helped to abate the shock. Nor does the knowledge that the loss is common to the whole nation make it any the less for any one of us.

As the mind revives and tries to readjust its poise, after the first impact of grief has subsided, swarms of memories, winged with a variety of sentiments, assail one. Wonder that so rare a being, at once so majestic and so exquisite, should actually have lived in our midst ; gratefulness that we were privileged to be near it and to have listened to its great utterance ; shame that we did not sufficiently strive to be worthy of that privilege ; regret at innumerable opportunities lost, never to be recovered ; anger at our own unworthiness ; self-pity at our now orphaned state ; and many other feelings which I cannot define.

And yet indulgence in sorrow is not wholesome, and men must learn to subdue it without turning hard-hearted. He taught us that lesson over and again, both by his noble words and by his own brave example. During the last few months, Death

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had snatched away, one after another, several of his dearest companions and associates. Charlie Andrews and Surendranath Tagore, Kalimohan Ghosh and Gourgopal Ghosh and that exquisite singer of his songs, "Khuku",—he had loved them all and, while they lived, had constantly thought of them. ( How touching it was to see him put aside his important literary work and turn over the leaves of his books on Homeopathic or Biochemic medicines whenever he heard that one of us in the asrama was ill ! ) But when news of each death was broken to him, he uttered not a word of complaint, withdrew into himself, and emerged, unshaken, a tower of strength to us all.

Far as I gaze at the depth of thy immensity,  
I find no trace there of sorrow or death or separation ;  
Death assumes its aspect of terror  
And sorrow its pain  
Only when, away from thee,  
I turn my face towards my own self.

So he sang in one of his songs translated by himself after Andrews' death.

But though we drew our strength from him to the last, it was most painful to watch him struggle with his own physical suffering. Only those who attended on him day and night during those days could have any idea of the ruthless siege which the forces of death were slowly laying round him, of the acute mental suffering, natural to a sensitive spirit, as he felt his marvellous instruments of sight and sound grow feeble from day to day, of his battle with his own mind as he resigned himself to the condition of physical helplessness in which he lay exposed. How poignant and true are the lines written on the day before the operation !

Sorrow's dark night, again and again,  
Has come to my door.  
Its only weapon, I saw,  
Was pain's twisted brow, fear's hideous gestures  
Preluding its deception in darkness.

Whenever I have believed in its mask of dread,  
 Fruitless defeat has followed.  
 This game of defeat and victory is life's delusion ;  
 From childhood, at each step, clings this spectre,  
 Filled with sorrow's mockery.  
 A moving screen of varied fears—  
 Death's skilful handiwork wrought in scattered gloom.<sup>1</sup>

And yet during the whole course of this illness, which never really left him since the attack first laid him prostrate in September last, not once did he betray signs of morbidity or despair, and, what is truly amazing, he never lost his keen interest in things and events in the world outside. How excited he was when told of Miss Rathbone's open letter to the Indians. His physical condition was causing concern even at that time and we were quite frightened of his excitement as he dictated the reply. "I do not care," he said "what our British masters and their loyal henchmen in India will think or say about me. I must speak out what I feel. . . ." And as he related how he had seen half-starved women and children stir up puddles of mud for a handful of drinking water, his voice broke down and tears streamed down the corners of his eyes.

Deeply and passionately as he loved and felt for his own people, his love and interest were not confined to them. He brooded over the outcome of the present war and worried over the fate of the innocent millions of all nations who had been dragged into the war as its victims, for no fault of their own. In particular, his sympathies went out to the Chinese and the Russians. He had hopes that the great social experiments of the latter would one day change the face of civilization all over the earth. Though he rejected much that he found crude in the communist philosophy, he was greatly impressed by the spectacle of a civilization the benefits of whose achievements were equally enjoyed by all its people. He wished the Russians well in the war and was depressed whenever he read of reverses on their

1. English translation by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty —Ed.

front. Nor, despite his sympathy with the other side, did he ever think of the Germans and the Japanese as the sole and unmitigated villains in the drama. The world—he had never tired of repeating years before the present burst-up—was caught in a trap set by certain tendencies in the modern civilization which were being encouraged and patronised by the governing classes in practically all the countries of the world. The cure of the evil must be something more fundamental than merely exterminating this people or that.

In the midst of these big problems and of his own literary activity which did not cease till the day of the operation in Calcutta, he constantly thought of his beloved Santiniketan and its little affairs. How happy he looked when he was told that the general kitchen had been thoroughly renovated and considerably extended and that under a new manager both the cooking and the serving of food had also greatly improved ! A few days before he left for Calcutta, he sent for a copy of “Subhāshitaratna Bhāndāgāram” from the Library and himself marked down the sanskrit slokas ( even though his eyes troubled him a great deal ) and sent for S. J. Nityananda Goswami and explained to him how he wanted the slokas to be taught to the children. Nor did he forget to remind him of the same the day before he left.

Suddenly he asked, “Who is teaching Bengali in the School these days ? I hope some one who truly loves literature and has a real sense of *ras*—and not a mere erudite pedant. The children must catch the feeling of the sound from the voice of the teacher.” He went on to explain how he used to lose himself in joy when teaching little children. His voice became hoarse as he added, “But I can no longer teach them myself, nor supervise.” Immediately he was annoyed with himself and murmured, “I don’t know how I have become so weak that I can hardly talk without my voice betraying me.”

He saw to it himself that jars of lozenges or boxes of chocolates were always kept in his room at hand for little boys



THE POET WITH HIS GRAND DAUGHTER NANDITA DIVI



and girls, who never went to his room without coming out with one. Not even pariah dogs were excluded from his kindness. One of them managed to make himself an honoured inmate of Uttarayana by the simple process of seeking shelter under his chair. Each morning it would come and obstinately stand near him until he touched its head with his hand, when it would either sit down near his chair or a little further away. Nor did he forget to immortalise that dog in one of his poems. Lalu is still fed twice and is as well taken care of as any other pet.

His sense of humour never deserted him. His nurses and attendants will treasure as their greatest reward the kindly witticisms and pleasantries that he constantly exchanged with them. He could never get over his amusement at being fed on Glaxo, and would refer to himself as a "Glaxo baby". As he could take nourishment only in very small quantities which would gradually be increased, his amusement was very great when he was told that the dose he was being given was the same as for a two-month old baby. Since then each time Glaxo was served, he would enquire, "How many months old am I today?"

Next to children, I think, he loved trees. During the summer vacation, when the scarcity of water in the wells had become a serious menace, he was much distressed at the fate of the trees. "Have you a *mahua* tree in your garden?" He would suddenly enquire. "If not, then you must plant some. When they grow, you will find how Santhal women always gather under them." He who was so reluctant to take any nourishment and would not touch the most carefully prepared delicacies,—how eagerly and excitedly like a child he picked out and nibbled at a *jām* (জাম) when a bunch of them was brought to him from "his own tree" at the back of "Shyamali"! He kept the bunch near him and would tempt others: "Just taste one and see how sweet these my *jāms* are!"

He was very keen during those last days that the birthday jayanti of Abanindranath Tagore should be fittingly celebrated at Santiniketan. At all hours of the day he would send for Rathi



Babu or Suren Babu or Nanda Babu and discuss with them afresh the arrangements for the occasion.

And so the days passed. His fever rose higher each evening and the nights were less restful. The doctors were obliged to come to the conclusion that he must be removed to Calcutta for further treatment. The decision upset him. "Why can't I be allowed to die in peace? Haven't I lived enough?" When it was explained to him that there was every hope of the disease being brought under control and that the country still needed him in these critical times, he grudgingly submitted, only murmuring, "Perhaps I shall not see these trees again."

Painfully vivid is the memory of the fateful morning of the day he was taken to Calcutta. He was sitting in the room upstairs, waiting to be carried downstairs to the bus. I went in and touched his feet. He looked up sadly and did not smile. "ज्याय" ( I go ) was all he said, and then looked away. I shrank within myself, so ominous that simple word sounded. Slowly and carefully he was brought down and put on the bus. Marvellously beautiful he looked as he lay reclining inside, robed in a black gown, wearing dark glasses. As the bus moved forward, many suppressed their sobs, some clicked their cameras, but the great majority sang "Ämäder Santiniketan." The joyous spirit of that song and the superb beauty of the form within the bus cured the temporary morbidity of the spirit and revived and strengthened the hope that surely he will come back. Such a one cannot die. On both sides of the road to the station men and women had gathered to catch a glimpse of the passing bus and, if lucky, of the face within. By the time he was comfortably lodged in the beautiful saloon car, we had regained our spirits and were almost cheerful. "What a magnificent reception we shall arrange when he returns after a month! What happiness to look forward to!" I said to my companion as the train slowly steamed away. Miserable playthings of Fate! Little did we realise that all we would bring back from Calcutta would be a few handfuls of ashes and a great load of sorrow.

## RABINDRANATH AS AN INSPIRER OF MODERN HINDI LITERATURE

By Pandit Hazariprasad Dwivedi

MORE than three dozen books of Rabindranath Tagore have been translated into Hindi so far, and some of these have been so popular that more than one translator has tried his skill in order to perfect them. Of these, the famous drama *Chitrangada* has been the most frequently translated. The late Raja Rajeshwri Prasad Singh of Suryapura, Bihar, a close friend of the Poet, translated it as early as the nineties of the last century, that is, just after its first appearance. The Raja belonged to the old conventional school of Hindi poetry and he took a deal of sedulous care to represent faithfully the spirit of the original even at the expense of Hindi constructions. This work has since been published in the Rajeshwari Granthamala. Not long after another translation by Babu Gopal Ram Gahmari followed. Pandit Giridhar Sharma attempted yet another in 1919 and this was published from Indore. The list did not close here and the late Munshi Ajmeri, a powerful Muslim Hindi writer and poet, translated it in verse and the translation was published by the Sahitya Sadan of the celebrated poet Maithili Sharan Gupta. This last surpassed all its predecessors and became, perhaps, the last attempt to render *Chitrangada* into Hindi. *Gitanjali* too has been repeatedly translated and published, from its English translation as well as from the original Bengali, in prose and in verse. Recently Sudhindra of Delhi has translated it into verse with considerable success. *Gora*, *Muktadhara* and *Dakghar* have been translated and published at least twice each. Another work, *Smaran*, which has not been so much noticed in Bengali, has been translated into Hindi more than once for its profound human appeal.

These and other translations which include, amongst others, short stories, novels, essays, travel-diaries, autobiography, literary criticism and, above all, poems, have all enriched and inspired Hindi literature in more ways than one. This influence has been more pronounced in the realm of poetry than in any other branch of Hindi literature. The mystic element in *Gitanjali* kindled the imagination of the young and sprouting generation of Hindi poets who began to emulate and imitate it consciously or unconsciously. Some of them were undoubtedly sincere in their experience and attitude while the bulk consisted of a plethora of mushroom poets. Another influence rearing up this new tendency was that of the Romantic poets of English literature. In expression and diction this new bent was more foreign than indigenous and those not in touch with English poetry summarily dubbed it as vague, amorphous, obscure and unintelligible. The new type of Hindi poetry was named "Chhāyāvāda", literally, "Shadowism",—a term whose initiator is not known.

But Chhāyāvāda received its inner radiance from Rabindranath. It is interesting to see how the young poets of the incipient movement often raised a plea for vagueness and declared it to be the essential quality of poetry. Rabindranath's name was mentioned again and again in support. This tendency became so rampant that Prof. Kripanath Mishra ( who, by the way, writes occasionally in Bengali too) while editing the seventh volume of *Kāvita Kaumudi* ( a representative selection from Bengali poets, in the Nagari script with Hindi annotations ), was compelled to hazard "some plain statements about Rabindric poetry lest those of the Hindi fold should be so thoroughly scorched by the luminous flames of this mighty sun as to lose their very individuality and existence." A bitter controversy set in between the respective exponents of the old and the new and a considerable polemic literature sprang up, consisting chiefly of parodies and satires.

The rising movement, however, was not to be so easily nipped or silenced. Some powerful poets came forward to prove

themselves its worthy leaders. Surya Kanta Tripathi who adopted the pseudonym 'Nirala' or 'the peculiar one', revolted against the so-called matter-of-fact poetry of the day. Born and educated in Bengal ( Midnapur District ) and having drunk deep at the springs of Bengali poetry old and new, Nirala in the beginning was more Bengali than Hindi. Though discouraged, denounced and ridiculed, he held his own in supreme indifference and carried the banner of revolt triumphantly in his hands. He wrote a book on Rabindranath's poetry with translations and explanations, the first of its kind.

Rabindranath's genius has enriched the prosody and metrics of the Bengali language in myriad ways. No single poet has offered such a vast and refreshing variety of metrical forms, rhymes and rhythms to the language he handled. He was pre-eminently the 'poet of sound which he deftly knit together with sense and he wrote very closely for the ear. Nirala was fully aware of this special characteristic of Rabindranath and he tried "to imbibe in his own humble way this uncommon skill of the Poet to create new harmonies." He "drew from elsewhere as well as discovered his own." In addition to this discovery of poetic metres, he also "composed songs of seven, twelve, sixteen, eight, ten, six, fourteen syllables." He tried to follow Rabindranath's analysis and criticism regarding musical compositions. "Hindi poetry has been influenced by the Poet's tunes". In the introduction to *Gitika*, Nirala has elaborately surveyed the distinctive characteristics of Rabindranath's tunes.

Then came Sumitranandan Pant, sweet and nonchalant, yet resolute and convincing. He studied Rabindranath, not to imitate his models but to know the spirit of his great genius. He analysed Hindi language, metres and sounds and brought out the innermost spirit of its individuality. He challenged the old conventions in metrics, form, diction and even grammar. He is a prominent lyricist of modern India.

Then followed Siyaram Sharan Gupta, simple in living and rich in thought, with a detailed study of Rabindranath to his

credit. The intellectual setting of his poems is inspired by the writings of Rabindranath. Next came Mohanlal Mahto 'Viyogi' of Bihar, who claims to be Rabindranath's direct disciple ( he was a Santiniketan-ashramite for some time ). The eminent poetess, Mahadevi Varma, Principal of the Mahila Vidyapitha, Allahabad, is a mystic in the true sense of the term. Whether she got an immediate and direct inspiration from Rabindranath is more than I can say, but her poems fall in the same category as those of *Gitanjali* and *Gitimalya* ; both are song-offerings, a dedication and a surrender. However, her genius seems to be quite independent.

As we are surveying the poets, not in order of merit but according to their inspiration from Rabindranath as revealed in their writings, I have deliberately postponed the consideration of a most distinguished and scholarly poet, Jayashankar Prasad, who, though elderly, belonged to the group of Nirala and Panta—the leaders of this new movement. Prasad's poems are backed by his scholarly knowledge of the old and the new, while his dramas open up a new chapter in Hindi literature. He was a profound thinker and a serious student of history. It is remarkable that his early poems are in Braja-bhasha. When *Gitanjali* won world-wide fame and appreciation, Prasad not only changed his subject matter but also his medium of expression. It may be pointed out that the language of the old, conventional Hindi poetry was pre-eminently Braja-bhasha, and the extant Hindi current in modern prose came to be accepted as a suitable vehicle of poetic thought pretty late, not until it had eventually disarmed the blatant opposition of the hot-headed obscurantists. This is an entirely twentieth century movement, many veterans of which are still among us. This change in the medium of poetry inevitably brought about a rapid and concomitant change in the subject-matter also. Hindi poetry freed itself, as if miraculously, from old shackles and emerged out of old conventions, vibrant with a new life and a new capacity to absorb the ever-increasing variety of a fast growing knowledge. A constant adherence to

traditional subjects and forms had rendered Braja-bhasha so typically round and suave as to deprive it of pointedness and immediacy of expression and the power of conveying novel ideas in novel forms. A new vision of things carries within itself the compelling necessity of evolving new expressions also. Consequently, when Prasad changed his subject, he was naturally led into changing the language too. There were poets who had altered the latter but not the former. But Prasad had changed the language as an outcome of a change of subject. Now this new subject of Prasad's poetry was undoubtedly mysticism which had come into vogue with the widespread recognition of *Gitanjali*. The influence of Rabindranath's *Natir Puja* is discernible on Prasad's drama *Ajatashatru* and it can be reasonably contended that Prasad had been inspired by Rabindranath. Recently Nirala has tried to establish the same by means of illustrations from Prasad's poems.

Thus we see that these rebel poets entirely revolutionised the realm of Hindi poetry by working out a complete metamorphosis in subject-matter, language, expression, diction, metre and style. Obviously they were no imitators. They have made Hindi what it is, the central language of India and an eminently fit, and powerful medium of expression of Indian thought and culture.

Rabindranath's *Gitanjali* has been responsible for the introduction of a new, rhythmic prose in Hindi literature. Rai Krishnadas's *Sadbana* knit together "the free looseness of prose with the gathered and intent paces of poetry." The riches of its thought extracted appreciation even from the late Pandit Ramchandra Shukla who was a mordant critic of sloppy sentimentalism. So also Viyogi-Hari's *Antarnad*. The critical essays of Rabindranath have variously inspired Hindi writers, and the one in particular on "The Neglected Figures of Classical Literature" moved a poet of Maithili Sharan Gupta's magnitude. Urmila, the wife of Lakshmana was one of the neglected figures of Ramayana, "standing in the wings but not allowed an entrance

on the stage." In *Saketa*, Urmila received all the tender solicitude of the old, veteran poet, Maithili Sharan Gupta. Like Tulsidas, he is also essentially a Bhakta, but the heroine in his epic is not Sita but Urmila, not a Siddhā but a Sādhikā.

Rabindranath's *One hundred Poems of Kabir* has also provoked the serious attention of the scholars to study Kabir more thoroughly. The first edition of the well-known *Hindi Navaratna*, a critical study of the nine jewels of Hindi poetry by the Mishra Brothers, had not included Kabir, but the second one hastened to rectify the omission. In order to keep the number nine intact, two of the poet brothers were headed together into one and a distinct position was assigned to Kabir. Dr. Ramkumar Varma of the Allahabad University, himself a poet of the new school, wrote a book on the mystic element in Kabir. Rabindranath's article on the mendicant mystics of Hindi which had appeared in *Prabasi* was afterwards incorporated as an introduction to *Dadu*—a scholarly study of Saint Dadu and his works by Prof. Kshitimohan Sen, Shastri, of the Visva-Bharati. This article is now available to the Hindi-reading public, in translation, published by the Hindi-Grantha-Ratnakar Karyalaya of Bombay, and has had a warm reception.

It may be pointed out that Rabindranath translated Kabir's poems with the assistance of Prof. Kshitimohan Sen. Not that the poet did not know Kabir before, for the founders of Brahmo Dharma in Bengal well knew Kabir, Nanak and other saints of the Nirguna School. Akshaya Kumar Dutta's *Indian Devotional Sects*, in Bengali, was based on Wilson's memorable book, *Hindu Sects*, with fresh additions and improvements. These books dealt with Kabir, his sect and philosophy. Rabindranath's early writings also drive us to the conclusion that he did know these mystics already, but his sources were rather indirect. Poems of *Katha* are based on Krishnadas's *Bhaktamala* which is the Bengali edition of Nabhadas's work of the same name. The Bengali edition is more than a translation, as it includes many things that are not found either in the original work of Nabhadas

or its traditional commentary by Priyadas. Rabindranath had not such an intimate knowledge of Hindi, particularly old Hindi, as to be able to form a direct acquaintance with the originals and Prof. Sen's help made up for this lack. Those not properly informed on these points have, not infrequently, landed themselves into forming wrong impressions. At times eminent Hindi scholars have laboured under misunderstanding and often contentions have been set up to the effect that Rabindranath had secured an easy fame by ingeniously polishing the "rugged" ideas of Kabir with the borrowed lustre of Western mysticism. In Bengal also enthusiastic Vaishnavites have claimed Rabindranath's poetry to be no more than a repetition, or at best a re-statement, of the Vaishnava devotional attitude. The interested critics of a type in the West have also sought to prove the indebtedness of Tagore to Western mysticism. Now and then charges of provincialism, nationalism and even internationalism have been levelled against him. But it is patent that all such claims, assertions and accusations are founded on erroneous information or misrepresentation of facts. Blind devotees do no better service than prejudiced critics, for both have a morbid tendency to make wishful discoveries or startling revelations ; both are lovers of a wistful romance in literary criticism.

It is an impossible job to explore and discover Rabindranath's influence on literature by citing stray poems torn from their contexts or by recounting the endless series of his works and articles. The greatest service that Rabindranath has rendered to Hindi literature is that he has emboldened it to the realisation of its distinctive existence, contribution and mission and taught it to stand on its own legs. His powerful and prodigally generous personality has instilled courage and self-reliance in the younger generations of Hindi litterateurs ; they are not haunted by feelings of an imaginary inferiority complex which obsessed their predecessors. Hindi has ever been fully conscious that Rabindranath wrote originally in his mother tongue and not in English, as is still strangely believed in some of the provinces of



our country. With a self-discerning eye, Hindi scholars began to explore and perceive the potentialities as well as the actualities of the merit of their own language and the mood to imitate almost completely vanished. Today Hindi literature is following the distinctive evolution of its own life-force and has that integral and vital self-consciousness which is infinitely more valuable than all the literary conventions of the past. The future will witness the appearance of bright luminaries in Hindi literature, but it will ever be gratefully remembered that Rabindranath Tagore helped to propagate this new consciousness and new vision. The one unique quality of this towering genius has been that while it influenced a literature, it did not dominate or eclipse its innate originality ; it only roused its own life-force, fostered its own inner growth ; and so it was that under his benign and invigorating influence, Hindi cast off the slough of diffidence and determined to take up its share in the gradual building up of a regenerate India.

## TAGORE AND MARATHI LITERATURE

By R. S. Joag

BENGAL and Maharashtra have, it is said, something in common so far as their outlook on life is concerned. Whether it is patriotism which has periodically convulsed the youth of these two provinces into violent political activity or some other deeper trait, it is difficult to say. There have certainly been occasions in the modern history of India when the hearts of the young in Maharashtra were throbbing to the same tune of Swadeshi and Boycott as those of the youth of Bengal. All this, however, is political history. To the student of literature things might appear to be somewhat different. With Bengal he generally associates emotional idealism while Maharashtra is credited by him with rugged realism. This difference seems to have dominated the respective literatures of the two provinces and an attempt to co-relate them may after all prove futile.

What Bengal has borrowed from Maharashtra is not relevant to our enquiry here. Marathi literature has, however, been enriched to a great extent by translations from Bengali. This has happened particularly in the branch of the novel. The movement began as early as 1898, when *Anandamath* of Bankimchandra was first translated into Marathi. Among the writers most popular with the translators were Bankimchandra, Ramesh Datta, Harisadhan Mukhopadhyaya, Damodar Mukhopadhyaya, Nanilal Bannerji, D. P. Roy Choudhuri and later Rabindranath and Saratchandra Chattopadhyaya. Bankimchandra was, of course, the most popular with the readers. Those who did this most useful work of bringing this literature in Marathi were mainly editors and publishers of popular series of novels. Mr. Mitra of the *Manoranjana*, who went so far as to adopt a Bengali name for himself, Mr. Bhase, who was the editor of the *Bhārata Gaurava Grantha Mālā*, and the veteran V. G. Apte of *Ananda* were the

chief mediators between the two literatures. Mr. V. S. Gurjar, still an active writer, is responsible for many a delightful rendering from the Bengali novel and story literature. All these translations did not however really influence the indigenous novel, which followed its course along the lines laid down by the great Marathi novelist Haribhau Apte. The realism which pervades the writings of this novelist is representative of the inborn tendencies of the Maharashtrian character, and though the romantic novel continued to satisfy the need of young readers, who like to dwell in realms of fancy, Marathi novel as a whole never very seriously followed the footsteps of Bengal.

The greater part of the literature of Rabindranath has yet to be translated into Marathi. In fact, while it was being produced it was impossible for translators in a foreign language to keep pace with it. What has been rendered into Marathi is however sufficient to give an idea of his literature to the common Marathi reader. The Nobel Prize was naturally responsible for the sudden attention he received at the hands of Marathi writers. Among his novels translated into Marathi are *Gorā*, *Naukā Dubi*, (*The Wreck*), *Ghare Bāire*, (*The Home and the World*), *Chokherbāli* and *Yogāyoga*. The main attention was given to the *Gitanjali*, first translated by Rao Bahadur G. V. Kanitkar, and then by the well known novelist Haribhau Apte. Both these were prose renderings and were done from English translations. A third attempt was made late in the day by Rgvedi to give a verse rendering of it and was a direct rendering from the original Bengali. The most successful and popular translation was the one by Apte and it had its significance inasmuch as it made prose-poetry popular with the young Marathi writers as well as readers. The *Gardener* and the *Crescent Moon* were rendered into Marathi only partially. Of the plays the *Post Office* and *Chitrāngadā* have appeared in the Marathi garb. The *Shāntiniketanamālā* published by V. G. Apte gave a series of his miscellaneous writings in Marathi. Prof. R. B. Athavale of Ahmedabad has very ably rendered his critical essays in *Prācīn Sāhitya* and very recently the essays on *Swadesha*

and *Samāja* have been made available to the Marathi reader. To Acharya Bhagwat we owe the renderings of the *Karna-Kuntī Samvāda* and the *Pratibhāshana*. A few stories have been translated, the most popular being the *Kābuliwālā*.

These translations cannot give us a true idea of the real influence of Rabindranath on Marathi literature, which in fact is not considerable, though important. The only appreciable strain of his influence is felt in the new form of prose-poetry, which gained a footing in Marathi literature since the day the *Gitanjali* was translated into Marathi and the *Gardener* and the *Crescent Moon* made available to readers in English.<sup>1</sup> The earliest attempt to imitate Rabindranath was made by Kavi-bhūshana B. G. Khaparde in his *Kāvyakāntāra* and the *Sarvaswāchī Gadya Gānī*. A yearning for the Divine Being and a mystical way of expression were the points common to the imitator and the imitated. In subject matter and style these prose-poems approach the *Gitanjali* and the *Gardener*. Mr. K. M. Sonalkar from Khandesh was another poet to go in for prose-poetry and in his *Kamalaparāga* we get another instance of the influence of Rabindranath. Both these attempts did not become popular and are now practically forgotten. The Marathi reader is not favourably inclined towards prose as the vehicle of poetry and prefers for the most part a clear concrete expression to the vaguely beautiful symbolism. Mr. Khaparde, a theosophist, can be said to have a predilection for vague yearnings. The younger Marathi generation, however, has little claim to this sort of sentiment. Two names of writers from the younger lot need mention. One is that of 'Shashānka' from Oundh and the other is Shankar Sathe from Karachi. These two seem to have definitely taken to the new form. Shashānka has written, in addition to his prose-poems in the *Vartika*, a play called *Shashikalā* much in the same way as Tagore. There is some genuine merit in the writings of these two authors ; but

1. The Bengali originals of these poems are, however, verse proper and not prose poetry.—Ed.

either because they fall far short of the high standard of their own model or because the vogue of prose-poetry has already lost its initial charm, they have failed to take a grip on the Marathi reader. Fresh and stray attempts in this direction are still being made by youthful writers not conversant with the more difficult art of verse-making. These obviously cannot be taken very seriously.

A new form of prose-poetry has made its appearance in the last four or five years. This has been named as *Rūpaka-kathā* and the credit of its introduction goes to the well-known novelist and short-story writer Mr. V. S. Khandekar. It has been copied by younger writers with varying success. It is allegory pure and simple, and has been very effectively made use of by the novelist in his recent novel *White Clouds*. It is difficult to say definitely whether this form of poetry was the natural outcome of the *Gitanjali* style of writing. There is little of the strangely beautiful visionary dreaming of the *Gitanjali* in it. It is more concrete in expression, and seemingly less obscure; and yet very poetic. Even if it is regarded as connected with the Tagore way of writing, the connection is rather distant and the similarity probably superficial.

Coming to verse, the influence appears to have penetrated a little deeper. It should be noted that this is to be found mainly among the poets of the Vidarbha which is nearer to Bengal than any other part of Maharashtra. The Deshpande group of poets is much imbued with this subtle, ethereal, visionary dreaming, characteristic of the poetry of Tagore. Anil leads this small group of poets and his *Phulwāta* is a good specimen of this school. Gunwant Deshpande, Vaman N. Deshpande, P. Y. Deshpande and Mrs. Deshpande belong more or less to this group. A few outside Vidarbha carry a little of this spirit. Viragi and Sumanta from Kolhapur are among them. Though this school has made a place for itself in Marathi poetry, it certainly cannot be said to be flourishing.

There is another channel through which Tagore's influence

is regarded as having made itself felt in Marathi poetry. It is through the poet Tambe, one of the leading lights in the older generation of living poets. There is no doubt that Tambe had for a while felt an attraction for the *Gardener* and the *Gitanjali*. A number of places where similar ideas occur have been pointed out by close students of Tambe and Tagore. The allegorical strain is there and the poems are often addressed to the Divine Being. The form however differs very much from that of the *Gitanjali*. Tambe is much more rough in his expression and direct in his metaphor. Owing to Tambe's popularity among the younger poets this allegorical strain appears from time to time in modern Marathi Poetry. But Tambe himself seems to have got out of it and the allegorical strain lost whatever strength it possessed in the beginning.

A more direct debt to Tagore is to be traced in the *Kanikās* of modern poetry. They are small epigrammatic pieces very much like the old Subhāshitas in Sanskrit. Five lines with a particular system of rhyme giving one whole idea is the form of these *Kanikās*. They have been in vogue for some years past and Mr. Gopinath Talwalkar, the present editor of the *Ananda* was the first to use them in Marathi. The name of the form is also borrowed from Tagore's *Kanikās*. These have in the hands of lesser poets, degenerated into pointed satirical epigrams and are at present not noticed as serious poetry.

There is another aspect in which acquaintance with the poetry of Tagore may be said to have given a turn to present Marathi poetry. In fact it is still in the process of taking its effect. It is the new verse-form, at present called the Mukta-chhanda. To describe it accurately, it is free verse which does not recognise the rhyme restrictions, nor the law of regular lines of a given length. It also rises above the consideration of quantity of syllables, all syllables being taken as long. This new movement has to be traced to the influence of Tagore's poetical forms as understood in the Maharashtra. The fact that advocates of this new verse come mainly from Vidarbha adds strength to

this view. Attempts at writing verse in the more regular form of *akshara sankhyāka chanda* is only an admission of this influence on the part of the less advanced school of poets.

As a critic Tagore has been more admired than followed. His interpretation of the *Shakuntalā* had at one time been a subject of controversy among scholars and his elucidation of the character of Urmilā had evoked admiration on the part of critics. But even the admirers have not taken up the line of criticism indicated by Tagore. Marathi criticism has for the most part remained historical and has rarely shown an inclination towards the poetical interpretation.

And when all is said about Rabindranath and his influence on Marathi literature, a feeling that not enough of him and his poetry is read and studied in Maharashtra remains there. The Maharashtrians as a class are still indifferent to other Indian literatures. An edition of Tagore's poems transliterated in Devanagari and translated into Marathi is still a desideratum. The English translations cannot go very far in introducing and popularising Tagore to the general public. Unless this is done the full strength and influence of Tagore on Marathi literature will not be gauged.

# TAGORE AND TELUGU LITERATURE

By V. N. Bhushan

WITH his work as rich as it is rare and as varied as it is valuable, Rabindranath Tagore is the most fragrant flower in Bengal's ever-green garland of glory. But he is not a mere provincial figure, nor a mere national celebrity. He is a world personality who belongs to that esteemed band of writers who may be described as the great abiding fountains of Truth and Beauty, who exercise an immortal function and inspire an imperishable interest. No hungry generations tread them down !

Poet, play-wright, novelist, essayist, short-story writer, critic, letter-writer, educationist—Tagore has enriched literature in a remarkable manner. But Tagore's immortality rests not merely on his outstanding literary contribution, but on the significant manner in which he has stimulated thought itself and inspired generations of his fellowmen. There is no Indian language into which Tagore's works have not been translated. And these translations have proved to be not mere decorative additions but fertilizing agencies. The pulse of the Tagore spirit beats in every provincial literature of India. No other writer, Bengali or non-Bengali, either in the recent present or in the distant past, has ever attained the unique distinction of being the inspirer and moulder of a whole nation's literature.

Telugu literature too has received its fruitful share of the Tagore influence. Tagore in Telugu literature is about thirty-five years old, and the credit for first introducing his work to the Andhra public goes to Sri Mutnuri Krishnarao, the esteemed editor of the *Krishna Patrika*. It was during the troublous days of the Partition Agitation that he toured Bengal for over a year in the company of the late Babu Bipin Chandra Pal. It was then that he imbibed the meaning and message of Rabindranath Tagore.



On his return to his home province of Andhra he lost no time in conveying to his fellowmen what he had grasped of the great Bengali poet. By publishing translations of a number of the important works of Tagore in his weekly journal and also by writing a series of articles expounding the thought and the philosophy of the poet, Mr. Krishnarao introduced a new spirit into the rather moribund Telugu literature of the time. Some influences, like music, have the power of penetrating right down into the heart and of provoking the most favourable of reactions. The influence of Tagore awakened the younger generation of Telugu writers and readers to new wonders and worlds in which pulsated intimate meaning and imperishable beauty.

Mr. Krishnarao thus set the stage for the Tagore influence in Telugu literature. Then came the prologue-speakers and chorus-singers. Mr. Royaprolu Subbarao, now Professor of Telugu at the Osmania University, was the first to introduce what may be described as the Tagore Cult into Telugu poetry. Some years of stay at Santiniketan helped Mr. Subbarao to imbibe the Tagore tradition and to emulate it successfully in his writings, and his slim volumes of poetry which began to be published by the year 1913 created the vogue for a new type of verse and marked a new stage of development in Telugu literature. The Romantic and Mystic schools of modern Telugu poetry date from that time.

Among other poets who received direct inspiration from Tagore by their stay at Santiniketan and who have attempted to mould their musings after him, may be mentioned Mr. Abburi Ramkrishna Rao, now of the Andhra University, Mr. Mallavaipuru Visweswar Rao, and Mr. B. Gopala Reddi, the youngest Minister in the Congress Cabinet of the Madras Presidency. There are many others who have played the 'ape', not often 'sedulous', to Tagore's poetry. These, though not to be taken into serious consideration, yet prove the powerful influence that Tagore exercised on the minds of the Telugu poets of the last quarter of a century. But mediocre attempts apart, the sincere efforts

of genuine Telugu poets to import the Tagore spirit into their poetry have certainly marked a forward stage in the progress of Telugu literature. An atmosphere of mysticism delighting in simile and symbolism and coloured phrases and musical lines, a yearning after the ideal that forever loses itself in some cloudy chapel of the star of infinite desire, a passionate longing for the expression of Beauty in thought and technique, a deliberate attempt at achieving a dreamy and delicate lyricism—these are the characteristics of the Tagore-inspired Telugu poetry. This, however, does not mean that the Telugu poets have been able to write like Tagore. Modern Telugu poetry has not produced any Tagore, not even a genuine imitation Tagore. This is so partly because none of them possesses the genius of the great Bengali poet, and partly because the Andhra instinct, though imitative, is yet independent enough not to be completely slavish. The Andhra is never perfect and successful in his imitation; his individuality colours his imitations, though the consequences may be disastrous. Something of a similar nature has happened in Telugu poetry. The Tagore spirit is there brooding over a good bulk of modern Telugu poetry but the typical Tagorean accent is not authentic. It is rather feeble and faint; and the reason rests not on the inspirer but the inspired.

Tagore's influence has made itself felt in the spheres of the modern Telugu novel, the short-story and the drama. The novel in Telugu literature is a threadbare show, devoid of originality. The few good ones are either translations or adaptations from other languages. Among such are Tagore's novels. His *The Home and the World*, *Gora*, *Red Oleanders*, *The Wreck* have found their way into Telugu. But it cannot be said with any certainty that the influence of Tagore's fiction is visible in Telugu novels. The influences at work in the field of modern Telugu fiction are too many and no particular one has precedence. It may not be out of place to mention here

that Sarat Chandra Chatterjee is more popular than Tagore in Telugu fiction.

In Telugu short story, however, Tagore's influence is greater than in Telugu novel. Scores of Tagore's stories have found their home in Telugu literature and in the hearts of the Telugu reading public. *Mashi and Other Stories*, *Hungry Stones and Other Stories*, and several other stories published from time to time in journals—all have been translated into Telugu. Not only this, but the Tagore technique of the short story has also been copied by Telugu writers. The Telugu short-story, though of rather recent origin, is perhaps the most prolific literary activity during the last one decade. Tagore's influence has done not a little to spur this activity.

The drama in Telugu literature is of more recent origin than the short story. Yet its progress has been so fast that it is one of the most popular and prominent features of our literature at the present time. Here again, Tagore's dramas have played their part. His *Chitra*, *Post Office*, *Sacrifice*, *King of the Dark Chamber*, *Karna and Kunti*, *Kacha and Devayani*, *The Mother's Prayer* have not only been translated into Telugu but enacted also now and then by enthusiastic non-professional troupes. The Renaissance in Andhra chose the stage also as one of its agencies, and though nothing remarkable has been achieved in this direction, yet it has served the purpose of inspiring a handful of young enthusiasts to attempt a reform of the Telugu stage. Young art-lovers of Andhra who seek self-expression through the medium of the stage have always found a place in their *repertoire* for at least one play of Tagore. It may not be out of place to mention here that the English versions of the above named plays of Tagore have been for a long time and still are the favourites of amateur college societies and private circles of art-enthusiasts.

In addition to Tagore's poems, novels, short stories and dramas, his philosophical and critical essays, his letters, his articles on political, social, religious and aesthetic problems have

also found a place in Telugu literature enriching it in no small degree. Taking into consideration all these, it may be said without fear of contradiction that Rabindranath Tagore—whom Romain Rolland has compared to the Indus—has helped the fertilization of the pastures of Telugu literature.

After this much has been said, it may also be pointed out that Tagore's influence on Telugu literature, though very considerable, is yet indirect and not direct. Most of the translations of Tagore's works into Telugu are from English versions and not from the original Bengali. Some years ago, the Vavilla Book Publishing House of Madras attempted to bring out authentic translations of Tagore's works from the originals. But the scheme stopped with only one or two publications from the pen of Mr. Vaikunta Rao in collaboration with Sreemati Sobhana Devi. A successful plan of this kind may still be put into operation with great advantage.

But, in spite of the fact that most of Tagore's works have reached Telugu literature through the indirect channel of English translations, the fact cannot be denied that Tagore's thought and philosophy have filled the minds of many a modern Andhra writer. In fact, it may be no exaggeration to declare that there is no good Telugu man-of-letters after 1915 who has not, in some way or the other, come under the Tagore spell, and moulded himself and his work after the manner of the unofficial Poet Laureate of India. The writer of this article who has had his share in translating, staging and interpreting Tagore and who had the good fortune of moving in circles of Tagore-intoxicated young Andhras, knows how intimately Tagore's thought is held by some and with what reverential rapture they muse upon his very name! Among his erstwhile associates the present writer counts those who reel off passages after passages from Tagore's works and who recite portions of *Gitanjali* in the same spirit in which they do the *Gayatri*!

Telugu literature is suffused with the Tagore spirit—the

spirit that has crossed the seas and captivated the mind of western continents. Every educated Andhra knows something of Tagore—something which thrills him with inexplicable pleasure. The reason for such a penetrating and permeating influence of Tagore on Telugu literature—as also on the literatures of other provinces—is that Tagore has long ago exceeded the meaning of a mere man-of-letters. He has become a power, a veritable dynamo of cultural and creative influences. Apart from this, it appears to me that Tagore represents primarily the ageless poetic mood of India, the mood which helped her in the distant past to sound the depths as well as scale the heights of thought. It is this essential Indianness of Tagore's thought that stirs a responsive echo in the heart of every Indian, to whatever province he may belong. That Tagore's works which have inspired thousands of men and women all the world over should have influenced Telugu literature is no surprise at all. The surprise is that it is not more than what it is. As it is, the influence of Tagore on Telugu literature is considerable and for good. The impress of Tagore on Telugu literature is indelible and invaluable. Andhra is debtor to Bengal in this as in many other respects.

## WE, BIRDS IN THE CAGE\*

*By* Rabindranath Tagore

A HEAVY dark mantle is on the skies today  
And across the horizons,  
Fearfully in tears we ask and ask again,  
We, birds in the cage,  
“Listen friend, O friend of our heart,  
Has the dread night of doom then come ?  
Is the eternal light of day wiped out ?  
• Is our secure hope for all times then gone ?  
Is nothing left of God’s mercy under the skies ?”  
We look to you and fearfully ask,  
We, birds in the cage.

In the past, when suddenly the spring came,  
And fitfully blew southern breezes  
Carrying, from distant groves, sweet fragrance,  
It had for us a marvellous message of hope,  
Friend of our heart, dear friend.  
And when at times the night dawned  
And morning came laughing to the dark corners  
of the cage,  
Gilding with bright gold its dark inky bars,  
Its strange magic chased away  
All the pain of us fettered.

\* Translated by S. J. Apurva Kumar Chanda from the original Bengali poem in *Utsarga*.

Then in our heart we were one  
With the great world outside,  
We, birds in the cage.

But look at the eastern skies today,  
Nothing can you see there,  
Not even a faint line of gold burning  
Anywhere on the edge of darkness.  
Friend of our heart, dear friend,  
Bitterly clink our chains today ;  
We have nothing to make us forget our cage,  
Though in vain we seek within us and outside—  
Even that is lost today, the light which might fashion  
Mirages, cooling our burning eyes, and deluding us,  
Birds in the cage.

But the anguish of our palsied fear must not pain you—  
Do not sit at our cage door,  
Vainly crying out your heart in sorrow for us,  
No iron fetters bind your feet, dear Friend,  
Friend of our heart,  
Fly up then, far above the clouds and pour out your song  
In that cloudless blue, calling down to us :  
“The morning sun is still shining, it is not put out !”  
And we shall close our eyes and eagerly listen to that song,  
We, birds in the cage.



RABINDRANATH AND HIS WIFE MRINALINI DEVI WITH THEIR FIRST BORN





## MODERNIST POETRY

By Nolini Kanta Gupta

A MODERNIST poet sings

O bright Apollo  
"Tin' andra, tin' heroa, tina theon,"  
What god, man or hero  
Shall I place a tin wreath upon !

and a modernist critic acclaims it as a marvellous, aye, a stupendous piece of poetic art ; it figures, according to him, the very body of the modern consciousness and aesthesis. The modern consciousness, it is said, is marked with two characteristics : first, it is polyphonic, that is to say, it is not a simple and unilateral thing, but a composite consisting of many planes and strands, both horizontal and vertical. A modern consciousness is a section of world-consciousness extending in space as well as in time ; there is, on one hand, the bringing together and intermingling of diverse and even disparate contemporary cultures, produced by free and easy and rapid communication between different parts of the world ; on the other hand, there is the connection and communion with all the past civilisations brought about by modern scientific researches. A modern man, who is representative of the age, when he looks close into himself, would find in him a texture of consciousness, the warp of which is spread out from the culture of the Greenlander in the North Pole to that of the Polynesian near the South Pole as well as from the culture of the Anglo-Saxon in the far West to that of the Korean and Nipponese in the far East ; and the woof consists of traditions and legends threading past the Egyptian, the Sumerian and Atlantean glyphs and runes, and forward to present-day ideologies—totalitarianism and proletarianism or others like and unlike.

A modern artist when he creates, as he cannot but create

himself, will have to embrace and express something of this peculiar cosmopolitanism or universalism of to-day. When Ezra bursts into a Greek hypostrophe or Eliot chants out a Vedic mantra in the very middle of King's English, we have before us the natural and inevitable expression of a fact in our consciousness. Even so, if we are allowed the liberty of comparing the flippant with the serious, even so, a fact of Anglo-vernacular consciousness was given graphic expression in the well-known lines of the famous Bengali poet and dramatist, D. L. Roy, ending in

"*Amara* ( we ) . . .

A queer amalgam of Sasadhar,<sup>1</sup> Huxley and goose."

Indeed it has been pointed out that the second great characteristic of modern art is the curious and wondrous amalgam in it of the highly serious and the keenly comic. It is not, however, the Shakespearean manner; for in that old-world poet, the two are merely juxtaposed, but they remain separate; very often they form an ill-assorted couple. At best, it is a mechanical mixture—the aesthetic taste of each remains distinct, although they are dosed together. In a modern poet, in Ezra, or to a greater degree, in Eliot, the tragic and the comic, the serious and the flippant, the climax and the bathos are blended together, chemically fused, as part and parcel of a single whole. Take, for example, the lines from Ezra quoted above, the obvious pun ( Greek *tin'* or *tina*, meaning "some one" and English "tin" ), the cheap claptrap, it may be explained, is intentional: the trick is meant to bring out a sense of lightness and even levity in the very heart of seriousness and solemnity. The days of Arnold's high seriousness, of grand style pure and severe, are gone. To-day the high lights are no longer set on a high pedestal away and aloof, they are brought down and immixed with the low lights and often the two are indistinguishable from each other. The grand style rides always on the crest of the waves, the ballad style

1. Old style orthodox Pandit.

glides in the trough ; but the modern style has one foot on either and attempts to make that gait the natural and normal manner of the consciousness and poetic movement. Here, for example, is something in that manner as Eliot may be supposed to illustrate :

At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives  
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,  
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights  
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.

Well, the question is, has it succeeded ? For here, as in everything else, nothing succeeds like success. Any theory may be as good as any other, but its test is only in the *fait accompli*. Neither Ezra nor Eliot has that touch of finality and certainty, the definitiveness and authenticity beyond doubt, the Q. E. D. that a major and supreme creator imposes.

Bottrall, a modernist poet himself, says in effect the same thing. His poetic credo runs in this wise :

Nightingales, Anangke, a sunset or the meanest flower  
were formerly the potentiates of poetry,  
But now what have they to do with one another  
With Dionysus or with me ? . . . . .  
Microscopic anatomy of ephemerides,  
Power-house stacks, girder-ribs, provide a crude base  
But man is what he eats, and they are not bred  
Flesh of our flesh, being unrelated  
Experientially, fused in no emotive furnace.

What Bottrall means is this in plain language : we reject the old-world myths and metaphors, figures and legends, worn out ornaments—moon and star and flower and colour and music—we must have a new set of symbols commensurate with our present-day mentality and environment—stone and steel and teas and talkies ; yes, we must go in for new and modern terms, we have certainly to find out a menu appropriate to our own aesthetic taste, but, Bottrall warns, and very wisely, that we must first be sure of digesting whatever we choose to eat. In other words, a new

poetic mythology is justified only when it is made part and parcel, flesh and blood and bone and marrow, of the poetic consciousness. Bottrall's epigram "A man is what he eats" can be accepted without demur ; only it must also be pointed out that things depend upon how one eats (eating well and digesting thoroughly) as much as what one eats—bread or manna or air and fire and light.

The modernist may chew well, but, I am afraid, he feeds upon the husk, the chaff, the offal. Not that these things too cannot be incorporated in the poetic scheme ; the spirit of poetry is catholic enough and does not disdain them, but can transfigure them into things of eternal beauty. Still how to characterise an inspiration that is wholly or even largely preoccupied with such objects ? Is it not sure evidence that the inspiration is a low and slow flame and does not possess the transfiguring white heat ? Bottrall's own lines do not seem to have that quality, it is merely a lesson—rhetorical lesson, at best—in poetics.

A poet—a true poet—does not compose to exemplify a theory ; he creates out of the fullness of an inner experience. It may be very true that the modern poetic spirit is seeking a new path, a new organisation, a "new order", as it were, in the poetic realm : the past forms and formulae do not encompass or satisfy its present inner urge. But solution of the problem does not lie in a sort of mechanical fabrication of novelties. A new creation is new, that is to say, fresh and living, not because of skilful manipulation of externals, but because of a new, a fresh and living inspiration. The fountain has to be dug deep and the revivifying waters released.

It is a simple truth that we state and it is precisely this that we have missed in the present age. Chaucer created a new poetic world, Shakespeare created another, Milton yet a third, the Romantics—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron—each of them has a whole world to his credit. But this they achieved, not because of any theory they held or did not hold, but because each of them delved deep and struck open an

unfathomed and unspoilt Pierian spring. And this is how it should be. In this age, even in this age of modernism, a few poets have actually shown how or what that can be,—a Tagore, a Yeats or A.E., by the bulk of their work, others of lesser *envergure*, in brief scattered strophes and stanzas—such lines, for example, from Eliot

Who are those hooded hordes swarming  
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth  
Ringed by the flat horizon—

or such other out of even Cecil Day Lewis :

- My lover of flesh is wild,  
And willing to kiss again ;  
She is the potency of earth  
When woods exhale the rain.
- My lover of air, like Artemis  
Spectrally embraced,  
Shuns the daylight that twists her smile  
To mineral distaste.

In general, however, and as we come down to more and more recent times we find we have missed the track. As in the material field today, we seek to create and achieve by science and organisation, by a Teutonic regimentation, as in the moral life we try to save our souls by attending to rules and regulations, codes and codicils of conduct, even so a like habit and practice we have brought over into our aesthetic world. But we must remember that Napoleon became the invincible military genius he was, not because he followed the art of war in accordance with laws and canons set down by military experts ; neither did Buddha become the Enlightened because of his scrupulous adherence to the edicts which Asoka engraved centuries later on rocks and pillars, nor was Jesus the Christ because of his being an exemplar of the Sermon on the Mount.

The truth of the matter is that the spirit bloweth where it listeth. It is the soul's realisation and dynamic perception that expresses itself inevitably in a living and authentic manner in

all that the soul creates. Let the modernist possess a soul, let it find out its own inmost being and he will have all the newness and novelty that he needs and seeks. If the soul-consciousness is burdened with a special and unique vision, it will find its play in the most categorically imperative manner.

What the modernist usually expresses is his brain or a part of it, his small vital desires and velleities, his sensational reactions or some sections of these. He can do that certainly, but he can do that well only when he has reached and touched the soul that is behind them : for once this is found, those become vehicles and instruments, echoes and sparks, symbols and signatures of that one thing needful.

## TOLSTOY ON ART

By C. L. Holden

THERE is no doubt that in the novel and in music Russians have produced art forms that will stand the challenge of any other in Europe or the world, but generally one may say and feel that artistically and in matters of creative culture Russia is behind the rest of the world. It may then seem surprising that one of the very greatest of the Russians should on his own confession have spent much time in the study of the theory of art and of aesthetics. Yet such is the case, and his analysis of art is one of the most valuable we possess, and contains ideas that are still fruitful and applicable to art and to thought.

Perhaps it was the puritan in Tolstoy that first led him to consider art. Perhaps it was merely the Russians reacting to the obviously western and foreign art forms that filled the Russia of his adulthood. Perhaps it was the close association between religion and art that led him from religion to the world of art. At least each of these three possible reasons provides an excuse for the air of antagonism with which Tolstoy begins his study of the question of art in his most famous work on that subject, his book *What is Art?* Tolstoy gives us a vivid account of a rehearsal of an opera, such as might have found place in any of his novels. He describes the irritation and anger of the producer, the contemptuous treatment of the actors and singers, the repeated repetitions, the obedience of the workers and mechanists, the whole apparatus of human endeavour, and then asks, for what is this? He has an almost instinctive repugnance towards the grand shows of the theatre and opera. He dislikes this kind of spectacle as much as any early Christian father. This dislike leads him to a search for the aesthetic justification of such things. He tries to find if there is any good reason behind all this, any seriousness of purpose. And



this leads him to a study of the aestheticians as they are described in some of the standard histories of aesthetics.

We need not concern ourselves here with his detailed analysis of the theories of these men. We may however note his demonstration of the confusion in them. Art has been looked upon as the vehicle of beauty, and the different theories are only concerned with the different definitions of beauty. On the one hand, we have people who look upon beauty as something mystical, embracing philosophy, religion and life itself, so that any definition of it is bound to be extremely vague and so wide as to be unsatisfactory. On the other hand, we have people who look upon beauty as merely some kind of disinterested pleasure, but this also leads to vagueness because it inevitably includes all kinds of pleasures, such as those from taste, food, touch, etc, which may be logically justified, but which none the less are out of place in a theory of art. The error lies, says Tolstoy, in this persistence in regarding beauty as the activity of art. He shows that this kind of definition is only a shuffle to justify existing art.

Now he is able to begin his own definition of art. It is, he says, one of the conditions of human life. By words a man is able to transmit thoughts, by art he is able to transmit feelings. These feelings may be the most various. From this point of view his definition is as wide as any of those he has criticised. But he insists that if only the spectators or auditors are infected by the feelings invoked by the author then is it art. What is important here is not his definition, but his further explanation of the criterion of feelings, and his account of the change in the European attitude towards feelings. Generally by art we mean some work of painting, or music, or sculpture, or architecture or literature. But there are hundreds of other ways of conveying feelings. Artistic activity covers a very large field. What we mean by art then are those things and feelings which we regard as specially important.

The communication of some feelings is regarded as art, of

others as not art. What is the reason for this difference? The answer is that in the past those feelings which flow from religious perception are rightly called art. This calls for another explanation. Religious perception is a man's understanding of the meaning of life. Always in any time there are men who attempt to interpret life and its mystery. These men are leaders, and the superstitions, traditions, and ceremonies that arise from the memory of such a man is a religion. "Religions," he writes, "are the exponents of the highest comprehension of life accessible to the best and foremost men at a given time in a given society." As they are recognised as such they are the natural arbiters of feelings deciding what is right and what is wrong, what is significant and what is insignificant. If feelings bring men near to the dominant religion, they are good; if they move people away from religion then they are bad. Tolstoy's analysis may lack in philosophical and logical completeness, but it is surely historically and actually correct. It is not of course a question of the validity or otherwise of religion, but merely a realisation of what part religion plays in this subject of art.

Tolstoy now tells us how with the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe there began a cleavage in opinion. Slowly but certainly the upper classes of the European countries lost faith in the accepted religion of the day. This is obvious from a consideration of Renaissance Italian society, or eighteenth century French society. But it was these upper classes who had the best means, money and leisure and education to produce and encourage art. Yet they could clearly no longer value art for its expression of religious perception. There grew up therefore a new view of art which valued it only as an expression of beauty. And there grew up a new conception of art as something for the elite or chosen in which the common people could not take part and which they could not enjoy. Tolstoy does not fail to point out the economic foundation of this art. He says, "They cannot help knowing that fine art can arise only on the slavery of the masses of the people, and can continue only as long as that

slavery lasts. Free the slaves of capital and it will be impossible to produce such refined art."

It is interesting to notice how much more thorough Tolstoy is here than those English aestheticians of the school of Morris who believed in educating the masses in the appreciation of the art of the upper classes. This is also the idea of Oscar Wilde in his essay on socialism. But these are dreams. There will be a new art, a proletarian art, and Tolstoy has demonstrated its necessity in this essay of his. But where Russia of the revolution has sought after a new and more magnificent kind of art for the proletariat, basing itself on tremendous spectacle—an art imitated in its essentials by modern revolutionary Germany—and an art which is at heart materialistic, Tolstoy would go back to real religion. There is nothing finer, more exciting, more interesting, more vital, than the religious feelings of each age. There is nothing more real than the religion of simplicity, sacrifice and selflessness which is taught by Christ. Tolstoy is the great champion of the common people. The life of the working classes is full of vivid and fine subject matter for art. Sophisticated and educated people think that there is nothing greater than their own range of feelings, but Tolstoy sees them as extraordinarily limited. They are confined to three things—the feelings of pride, the feelings of sexual desire, and the feelings of weariness of life. He may be right in his analysis of the art of the upper classes. Certainly this is what appears mainly in his own novels, and in most European great literature. And at his time the theme of weariness of life was very widespread, though these days it seems to have lost much of its appeal to artists and to intellectuals. We have all become much too serious to be weary of life. Yet we should not forget that psychologists such as Freud would maintain that interest in sexual questions was not only an upper class interest but prevailed universally. And others such as Adler would maintain that the power motive which is another way of expressing the pride motive is also universal. Perhaps Tolstoy has been too extreme in his attack on the upper classes.

What interests them is of interest to all the world also. He is writing here more as a moralist than as a realist.

Yet there is a real and important point involved here. Tolstoy attacks what he thinks the narrowness of the upper class range of themes in art because they do not relate to the realities of life. They are not comprehensible to the masses. Good art, he insists, must please everyone. Art which is incomprehensible to the people must be perverted art. He is really and rightly attacking narrow schools of art, especially such as existed then in his day in French poetry and in German music. He has some very biting criticisms of both these forms. We are often told that if we do not understand at first, then if we listen or read again and again we will understand. "But," says Tolstoy, "this is not to explain, it is to habituate, and people may habituate themselves to anything, even to the worst of things." This is really a profound remark and not a mere commonplace, for it is precisely the work of art to make that understood which in the form of an argument or some intellectual presentation would not be understood. Further, at the root of good art lies the artist's sincerity. He is to transmit to us his experiences and sense of values. This he can only do effectively if he feels himself strongly. Otherwise it cannot infect people. If a work of art does not infect people with enthusiasm and delight, no explanation can make it contagious. If art is not spontaneous it is not art. He writes of the influence of a work of art in terms that suggest modern collective psychology. It creates a sense of unity between the listener and the artist. One feels as if the artist were expressing one's own feelings. A real work of art promotes this sense of freedom. We feel in the enjoyment of a good work of art released from ourselves; the sense of isolation and separateness is broken down. This is almost a gloss or comment on Aristotle's idea of *Catharsis*, or purification. All art unites people, this is both a definition and a test. The capacity for art is something in man which cannot be destroyed, however corrupt at times it may appear.

Such, in brief, is Tolstoy's view of art. We think it is still of value to us, because it calls attention to some very important principles, which it would be worth while applying on a large scale to literary and artistic creation. It is a view which has been challenged rather than accepted. It is challenged because it makes such big demands on us, for it calls for the rejection of much that we have held precious in human creation. By it most European art since the sixteenth century stands condemned. Yet it is good because it reminds us of a greater humanism in art. No art can neglect man. No art can concentrate on form and live only for a small circle. There must be in it the living breath of life, and this means man as he is today and always has been. Art must be related to religion again, not necessarily the older orthodox religions, but to that feeling, which is at the heart of most religions, of the importance and significance of human life and endeavour. Religion means the binding together of men, it separates man rightly from other forms of life because thereby it emphasises the importance of man. Tolstoy has called upon art to help in this conception, to get away from being the mere amusement or interest of a small leisured class. He may have been too severe on existing art forms, but he seems to have been right in stressing the necessity and the nature of purpose in art.

It is worth while now to consider just what Tolstoy has done in this essay of his on *What is Art?* He has criticised primarily modern nineteenth century art forms, because they lack contact and significance for the masses. He has only been able to criticise them effectively by including in his denunciation all art forms in Europe since the Renaissance, that is, precisely that period of which the cultured European is usually most proud. Again his argument has been the same. These art forms do not appeal to the people, there is nothing really universal about them. They are sophisticated, clever, technically skilful, but morally perverse. This is his judgement. Behind this judgement lies the belief, which Tolstoy takes for

granted, that feelings are universal, and that all men grasp and welcome the expression of feelings. We wonder how far this is compatible with some of the modern psychological theories of human behaviour, such as the type theory of Jung. The latter, for example, tells us that there are two major mechanisms of behaviour or reaction to life, that of introversion and that of extraversion, and that generally the two worlds of men and their creations are foreign and hostile to each other. Further he subdivides his main types into four other divisions. There are people of both types in whom the thinking or the feelings, or the sensation, or the intuition, predominates. These eight classes according to him constitute more or less closed worlds, and the values of each are denied or misunderstood by the others. It would seem then, if there is truth in this view of humanity and its behaviour, that Tolstoy has been mistaken. What then has he done? Clearly the significant thing in his essay is his insistence on the close relation between feeling and art, and his contempt for the intellectual in art such as existed in the music of Wagner and in the poetry of the French decadents. Tolstoy has written very bitterly against Nietzsche in his essay, but he really belongs with the school of Nietzsche in so far as he too denies the paramountcy of reason. Tolstoy in this essay and of course in his specially religious writings is an irrationalist. But to assert that art belongs not to the world of the rational is not after all a very original statement, yet his book strikes us as original. Wherein then lies its originality? It lies in this: we may admit that art is irrational, but it does not necessarily follow that reason is powerless before it. As Pascal said, the heart also has its reason. There must then, said Tolstoy, be some kind of commonsense about art. We cannot tolerate its excessive individuality, its deliberate pursuit of the bizarre and the obscure, and its denial of the ordinary human values. Art for art's sake is wrong. It departmentalises life. It refuses to recognise that the artist is also a man. Art for art's sake generally too involves the sacrifice of something good

in life to art. Certainly the widespread acceptance of such an idea would mean a justification of the part for the sake of the part, which is an injury to the whole. The only escape from this is to say that art is life, but this is a definition which robs art of all significance. Nor can it be tolerated, for if art is life then it must be governed by life. The creed of art for art's sake as expressed by the French decadents had another danger as seen by Tolstoy. It led to a kind of art that was above the comprehension of the ordinary man. It led to the removal of art of any kind from the life of the ordinary man, and Tolstoy felt that this was wrong. Art was something needed by all, something which all could enjoy. Therefore if a particular kind of art led away from this universality it was condemned. Tolstoy could not accept the removal of purpose from an artist's work. He was essentially one of those men who assert the necessity and paramountcy of purpose in life, even in art. It is easy intellectually to make fun of the idea of purpose, to show how absurd it is, how various and vain are the purposes men attribute to themselves, and how rarely a man does achieve what he thinks his purpose. But biologically and psychologically it is impossible to remove purpose from life. Tolstoy asserts this of art too. In one way or other art must serve humanity, and any theory which denies this or makes it difficult for the artist to serve must be banished. Tolstoy with his mind full of the condition of the Russian peasant and his heart full of admiration for the primitive Christians naturally saw humanity in terms of the masses. Hence his surprising condemnation of much that is really good and fine in European art.

## LAST WRITINGS\*

By Rabindranath Tagore

### POEM 4.

*The sunlight blazes hot,  
this lonely mid-day.  
At the empty chair I glance,  
no trace of consolation is there.  
Filling its heart  
Words of despair seem to rise in lament,  
the voice of emptiness laden with compassion  
whose inmost meaning cannot be grasped.*

*Like a dog looking with sad eyes  
for his lost master,  
his heart wailing with a blind sorrow,  
not knowing what happened and why,  
seeking everywhere with unavailing eyes :*

*More tender and sore even than his pain  
seems the voice of the chair,  
its dumb pain of emptiness  
pervading the room  
bereft of the dear one.*

Udayan,  
26th March, 1941,  
Evening.

\* These two poems, one of them composed shortly before the Poet's death, have been published now in a volume named *SHESH LEKHA* ( "LAST WRITINGS" ). It is a slender book with two songs and thirteen poems, most of them appearing for the first time, posthumously. The English translation, which is a faithful rendering of the original, is by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty.—Ed.



POEM 13.\*

*The first day's Sun  
Asked  
At the new manifestation of being—  
Who are you,  
No answer came.  
Year after year went by,  
The last sun of the day  
The last question utters on the western sea-shore,  
In the silent evening—  
Who are you,  
He gets no answer.*

Jorasanko,  
Calcutta,  
27th July, 1941,  
Morning.

\* This poem was composed in the early hours before dawn and dictated in the morning.





# RABINDRANATH'S LITERARY CRITICISM

By Dr. A. Aronson

RABINDRANATH was a distinguished literary critic, not because he was a poet of genius, but in spite of it. Literary criticism, even of the first order, has frequently been written by poets of an immature or under-developed sensibility who excelled in the appreciation of other people's literary achievements, but who themselves failed to convince posterity of their own artistic merits. Dryden, Pope, Dr. Johnson, and Matthew Arnold are instances to the point. They shaped the critical awareness of their age, while their own creations are remembered only in so far as they reflect the civilization of their time or introduce us to their own personal peculiarities and mannerisms. On the other hand, we know very little, or anything at all, of the critical opinions held by Homer, Dante, or Shakespeare ; all we can say is that they were potential critics of art and literature, and perhaps also of their age and of humanity in general. Their criticism, as criticism, has established no traditions ; there is Aristotle and Longinus to guide us along the difficult path of Greek and Latin literary appreciation ; there are the innumerable French, Italian, and English critics to open our eyes to the rediscovered unity inherent in all European art since the Renaissance ; there is Voltaire, the greatest of them all, a man of genius, if ever there was one, soberly formulating the aesthetic laws of his time, while utterly incapable himself to infuse life into them and failing again and again in his attempts at artistic creation. Where indeed is the poet of genius who was also an eminent critic ? There are, of course, the romantics. Wordsworth's Prefaces, as his own contemporary Coleridge remarks, are inconsistent with the greatness of his poetry ; they are feeble attempts to justify something that needed no justification at all ; Wordsworth's poetry is greatest when it is least of all concerned with critical preconceptions and formulas. Shelley's

*Defence of Poetry* is in no way more convincing. The tradition that both Wordsworth and Shelley established was certainly not based upon their critical writings : for their criticism is lacking in the integrity of thought and emotion which we find in their best poetry. Coleridge, the most eminent critic among the romantics, was also no mean poet, and he is perhaps the one in England who comes nearest Rabindranath as regards the inner structure of his criticism. On the Continent, there is, of course, Hegel whose Idealism found a fitting place in his writings on Art and Aesthetics ; and there is Goethe who happens to have been both a poet of genius and the most eminent literary critic of his time. Goethe and Rabindranath have more than this trait in common ; but this is not the place to dwell on the many similarities of these two greatest of men. All we can say is that during the romantic period and, in fact, throughout the nineteenth century almost all the poets of distinction attempted literary criticism with more or less success. We would like to start with the assumption that Rabindranath—despite the inspiration received from Sanskrit literature and philosophy, despite the very strong local tradition of the art of Bengal, and despite his religious convictions—has brought the literary criticism of the romantics, based as it was upon an idealist view of life, to perfection ; that he, in short, constitutes the climax of a literary tradition established in England by the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley, and by the criticism of Coleridge and Matthew Arnold. It should not be forgotten that Matthew Arnold's essay "The Study of Poetry", for instance, was published in 1880, when Rabindranath was already 19 years of age. In order to verify our assumption, however, we shall have to pass in review some of the most significant among Rabindranath's critical concepts and establish a relevant connection between his criticism and that of European Idealism.

## THE CREATION OF LITERATURE.

Rabindranath has given us a clue to his conception of the creative process in art, when he identifies the creator with either a child or a woman. This identification is never explained in terms of psychology ; it is rather a symbolical interpretation of the creative process, a singularly successful attempt to relate the creative work of the artist to some fundamental human characteristics.<sup>1</sup> Much of Rabindranath's criticism is in fact undiluted symbolism, it is "image-making" in the best sense of the term, based, however, upon the primal and elemental experiences of human life. This directness in his use of symbols and images makes his literary criticism so remarkably powerful and convincing.

Who is the creator, the artist, or the poet, asks Rabindranath. Is it a divine gift, an inspiration, a mysterious combination of natural and supernatural forces that make man create works of art ? And where does the unity come from that characterises a great poem and is absent from a newspaper-article ? It is, says Rabindranath, "the consciousness of personality, which is the consciousness of unity in ourselves."<sup>2</sup> But consciousness remains an abstraction only so long as it is not "coloured" by some emotion or idea. Emotions and ideas do not exist by themselves ; they are made possible by the pressure of external stimuli upon our consciousness ; they become integrated within ourselves. What we express in art is not our consciousness in its "pure" state, but those integrated emotions and ideas. For they constitute our personality ; and, furthermore, they make us aware of our own finite existence within the much larger

1. See the following quotations, two selected out of many similar ones : "I had been blessed with that sense of wonder which gives a child his right of entry into the treasure-house of mystery which is in the heart of existence." ( *The Religion of an Artist*. IN : Contemporary Indian Philosophy, 1936, p. 82. ) And : "Woman has realized the history of life in her child more intimately than man has done. This woman's nature in the poet has felt the deep stir of life in all the world." ( *Personality*, p. 25 )

2. *Creative Unity*, p. 81.

framework of the infinite. To express the consciousness of one's own personality is, according to Rabindranath, to acknowledge the experience of the infinite through the medium of the finite forms of art. A poem, therefore, is both an affirmation and a denial of one's own personality; it is both the "I AM" and the "THOU ART" of human existence. It implies both the realization of one's finite self and the realization of the infinite One in nature: "The I AM in me realizes its own extension, its own infinite whenever it truly realizes something else. . . . The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist, and the I AM in me crosses its finitude whenever it deeply realizes itself in the THOU ART."<sup>1</sup>

So far for the prime agent of creation, personality. But Rabindranath asks further: what kind of energy is it that urges human beings to express themselves in art, to "make images" that do not in any way serve their material needs and physical requirements? It would not be altogether meaningless to compare Rabindranath's "surplus-definition" of art with the interpretation of art and civilization suggested by psycho-analysis. If art, as Rabindranath says again and again, is the result of a surplus fund of emotional energy which "seeks its outlet" in the creation of beauty ("for man's civilization is built upon his surplus")<sup>2</sup> then it is indeed a sublimated form of our instinctual life, that part of the soul, in fact, "that is not all occupied with its self-preservation." Rabindranath does not tell us where precisely this emotional surplus comes from, nor does he explain in what way civilization is made possible by it. Psycho-analysis, it seems to me, began where Rabindranath ended, but Rabindranath himself began where the romantics could go not further. Experience undoubtedly provides us with that surplus

1. *The Religion of an Artist*, Ibid., p. 86.—Coleridge speaking of Imagination and Fancy comes to very similar conclusions as regards his "primary imagination"; his definition, however, suffers from an unjustifiable desire to be precise where no precision is either possible or necessary: "The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the infinite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." (*Bibliographia Literaria*, p. 124.)

2. *Personality*, p. 11.

emotional energy which seeks an outlet in artistic creation. The human personality integrates the facts of experience until this surplus of emotion has been established. It is then that our imagination "overflows". This overflowing of our integrated personality is the creative process.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of losing himself in the labyrinth of modern psychological research on the origin of art, Rabindranath guides the reader to the fundamental similarity that exists between poetry and religion. He does not specify whether religion too is the result of a surplus energy of emotion ( as psycho-analysis would have done ) ; he rather insists on the similar experience of the infinite in both of them. "Somehow," he says, "they are wedded to each other. . . ."<sup>2</sup> We can assume that this synthesis of poetry and religion takes place within man's personality; that, in fact, it constitutes the integrated unity of consciousness. Faith in the truth of one's own personality ( and, we may add, the expression of our consciousness in works of art ) "is a religion directly apprehended and not a system of metaphysics to be analysed and argued."<sup>3</sup> It is a pity, perhaps, that Rabindranath thought he had found a perfect synthesis of religion and poetry in Shelley, whose "religion", it seems to me, was of a purely rhetorical and unrealized kind ; for it was coloured by literary and pseudo-philosophical pre-conceptions.

1. Compare the following three quotations .

( a ) "Facts are like wine-cups that carry it ( beauty ), they are hidden by it, it overflows them." ( Rabindranath in *Personality*, p. 24. )

( b ) "A great poem is a fountain for ever overflowing with the water of wisdom and delight." ( Shelley in *Defence of Poetry*, p. 48. )

( c ) "Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings : it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity." ( Wordsworth in *Preface to his Second Edition*, 1800. )—The tendency will be found to be the same in all three of them. But while Wordsworth speaks of an emotion recollected in tranquillity, Rabindranath's consciousness of personality reaches much deeper into the very essence of the creative process. Shelley's water of wisdom and delight is as vague as everything else in his *Defence*. For we do not know of what kind of wisdom he is speaking. He certainly did not mean that wisdom which is integrated consciousness.

2. *The Religion of an Artist*, *Ibid.*, p. 82.

3. *Creative Unity*, p. 14.



and was lacking in all that spontaneity and directness without which such a synthesis would be nothing but an empty literary formula. This synthesis *does* actually exist, in all genuine folk-poetry, in Dante, in Goethe, in Blake, in Baudelaire, even in Shakespeare. It is, however, no accident that Rabindranath looked among the romantics for an inspiring example. For they were the first ( and this partly explains their loss of directness and vigour in poetry ) to become conscious of this synthesis and to formulate it in nicely constructed sentences.<sup>1</sup>

Rabindranath's definition of the creative process in literature is singularly consistent and needs no further comment. He elaborated and enlarged the literary formulas of the romantics which had lost their significance in the West long ago. By infusing new life into them he transformed them from historically determined aesthetic laws into universally applicable principles of creation. The poet's personality is the receptacle into which emotions and thoughts flow ; there they are compressed, intensified and integrated until they "overflow" and the process of creation begins. In case the emotions have not been properly integrated the "overflow" will lead to the creation of an "insignificant" work of art. In this interpretation Rabindranath ceases to be a romantic ; he is as "contemporary"

1. The following was written in 1815, after Wordsworth had composed most of what we today consider his best poetry : "In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry ; between religion—making up for the deficiencies of reason by faith ; and poetry—passionate for the instruction of reason ; between religion—whose element is infinitude and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription, and reconciled to substitutions ; and poetry—ethereal and transcendent, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation." ( *Essay, Supplementary to the Preface.* )—This tendency becomes more marked in Matthew Arnold who identifies both religion and poetry with "ideas". His own poetry is indeed one of ideas from which directness and spontaneity is altogether absent. Rabindranath, as will be seen from the following extract from Matthew Arnold, continued in the romantic tradition, but added to it an element of immediate experience which was absent from the writings of the later Wordsworth and Victorian poetry and criticism in general : "But for poetry the idea is everything ; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea ; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion to-day is its unconscious poetry." ( *The Study of Poetry.* )

as any of the most eminent modern critics. Here is, for instance, a relevant passage from T. S. Eliot dealing with the creative process of the poet : "The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together. . . . For it is not the 'greatness', the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts."<sup>1</sup>

### THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE.

A discussion on Rabindranath's aesthetic philosophy and its relation to Western aesthetic concepts would lead us much too far. We have to limit ourselves here to the idealist school of thought and the application of idealist philosophy to romantic poetry and criticism. The creation of a work of art, according to Rabindranath, implies a conflict, potential or real, between personality ( the I AM ) and the universe ( the THOU ART ). This conflict is resolved into harmony on completion of the work. Something resembling the Aristotelian *katharsis* takes place both in the poet and the reader. The poet's consciousness of personality will give rise to a similar consciousness of personality in the reader. Rabindranath therefore starts with the assumption that the conflict between the spiritual world of the individual ( his experience of the infinite ) and the material world of the universe ( finite objects in nature ) exists simultaneously in both poet and reader. The work of art, that is Beauty, establishes harmony and unity between the two. Finite matter is transformed into infinite spirit, and the former distinction between subject and object, matter and spirit, has been abolished. The poet's "spirit", therefore, when expressed in a work of art responds both to the finite and the infinite in the universe. Beauty is a means as well as an end in this process : "Beauty,

1. T. S. Eliot : *Essays : Tradition and the Individual Talent*, p. 19.

I say, is the bridge between matter and spirit. . . . As soon as material objects are felt to be beautiful, spirit permeates matter, matter in turn is vivified by spirit, and the outcome is joy. This bridge-building is still at work, in which the poet finds his glory. He strengthens old ties and evolves new ones, making the inert world fit for the human soul to live in."<sup>1</sup>

It is on this synthesis between spirit and matter that Rabindranath bases his assumption that beauty is also truth. For to be true to both the finite and the infinite, is to be true both to the self within and the One without. There is an admirable consistency and precision in Rabindranath's aesthetic thought which is so sadly lacking in most of the romantics. He quotes Keats with approval ; rightly, I think, because Keats was first of all a poet and to a considerable extent indifferent to literary or critical formulas. Shelley who in his own poems was so frequently and painfully "un-true" both to himself and the universe, formulated in unmistakably abstract and unrealized language the "truth" of a poem.<sup>2</sup> The relation between beauty and truth cannot be "critically" determined. Keats and Rabindranath knew what they were talking about when they identified the one with the other. Shelley and his followers substituted a literary formula for the actual and living experience.

Rabindranath fortunately never attempted to define beauty in a scientific way. He was always reluctant to define spiritual

1. The Nexus of Beauty. ( Chapter from *The Diary of the five elements.* ) IN : Visva-Bharati Quarterly, III/1, 1987.—Rabindranath follows in this quotation the idealist school of thought. Coleridge who always acknowledged his indebtedness to the contemporary German school of philosophy puts forward a similar thesis which, it seems to me, Rabindranath has most successfully applied to poetry : "Whatever in its origin is objective, is likewise as such necessarily finite. Therefore, since the spirit is not originally an object, and as the subject exists in antithesis to an object, the spirit cannot originally be finite. But neither can it be a subject without becoming an object, and as it is originally the identity of both, it can be conceived neither as infinite nor finite exclusively, but as the most original union of both. In the existence, in the reconciling, and the recurrence of this contradiction consists the process and mystery of production and life." ( *Bibliographia Literaria*, Chapter XII. )

2. "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth." ( *Defence.....* ).

phenomena the existence of which he took for granted as part of his artistic experience, but which when intellectualised would lose their significance at once. Whenever we find "definitions" in Rabindranath's writing, we accept them as the result of some fundamental experience, not of an intellectual analysis.

The finite, that is matter, consists according to Rabindranath in an organism governed by laws. It is needless to inquire what *exactly* he means by these laws. We cannot conceive nature (that which transgresses our personality, the One without), but as an ordered and harmonious whole. The infinite, that is the spirit, by the very fact that it is unlimited both in time and space, constitutes the complete freedom that reigns in eternity. If, therefore, as has been said, both the infinite and the finite have their place in a work of art, then both law and freedom, time and eternity, must be found in it too. Beauty is not an entity by itself; nor is it a synthetic abstraction. It is indeed a direction, a tendency, a fast moving powerful stream that carries poet as well as reader from the fixed laws of form and matter to the ever-changing freedom of ideas and the spirit, from the time-conditioned forms of existence to the experience of limitless and formless eternity: "The beauty of a poem is bound by strict laws, yet transcends them. The laws are its wings, they do not keep it weighed down, they carry it to freedom. Its form is in law but its spirit is in beauty. Law is the first step towards freedom, and beauty is the complete liberation which stands on the pedestal of law. Beauty harmonises in itself the limit and the beyond, the law and the liberty."<sup>1</sup>

In this definition of beauty Rabindranath again outgrows the romantics. Instead of Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquillity", we have here emotions subjected to a gradual evolution which leads the poet from the simple facts of "being" to the very complex phenomenon of "becoming". The beauty of a poem as well as the creative process which makes it possible, never "is"; it is rather a reflection, a mirror of ourselves and

1. *Sadhana, The Realisation of Life.*

of nature in terms not of knowledge or scientific perception, but of "becoming": "Man also wants his own atmosphere in which . . . he can express himself in his own creations that do not depend on knowing or getting, but involve only becoming."<sup>1</sup> Rabindranath was a contemporary in spirit both of the romantics and of Bergson. It is no accident, I believe, that he used the term "becoming"; nothing could fit better into his philosophy of literature than the Bergsonian concepts of "being" and "becoming". In Rabindranath as in Bergson they represent more than philosophical abstractions; they are attitudes of mind which for various reasons were absent from the romantics, but which on the other hand constitute a natural climax to the romantic and idealist school of thought.

The beauty of a work of art lies not so much in the heightened consciousness of its author as in the "rhythm" of its "becoming". Rabindranath hardly ever uses the word "rhythm" as signifying only cadenced and elevated speech. Rhythm expresses the realization of personality as well as of nature. It is the external evidence of the experience of the infinite. It expresses both the law and the freedom, time and eternity in the artist's creation. It is "the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction."<sup>2</sup> Rhythm can never be static; it expresses the process of "becoming" both within ourselves and without. The romantics still considered rhythm a purely external factor of artistic creation. According to Wordsworth, for instance, rhythmical verse is preferable to prose because it creates "a complex feeling of delight, which is of the most important use in tempering the painful feeling always found intermingled with powerful descriptions of the deeper passions."<sup>3</sup>

1. *The Philosophy of Literature*, IN : Visva-Bharati Quarterly, II/8, 1936.

2. *The Religion of an Artist*, Ibid. p. 88.

3. Wordsworth : *Preface to the Second Edition*. . . 1800.—Modern literary criticism is nearer to Rabindranath than to the romantics. Rhythm, according to Dr. Richards, is more than the mere sound-effect of words. In a poem the rhythmical pattern is "a tide of excitement pouring through the channels of the mind. . ." It is, furthermore, a "texture of expectations, satisfactions, disappointments, surprisals, which the sequence of syllables brings about." (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, Chapter XVII, p. 187.) Dr. Richards considers it a problem of response rather than one of creation. Both Rabindranath and Dr. Richards start, however, from the original experience of the poet. It is the "rhythm" of this experience which gives a poem its "feeling of reality".

Rabindranath was evidently not concerned with the effect, but with the essence of poetry.

### THE JUDGMENT OF LITERATURE.

Rabindranath does not specify how we are to arrive at a true judgment of what is beautiful. The literary critic, according to him, must have a "special culture" or "insight"; he must test the quality of a work of art "on the touchstone of his inner experiences"; his gifts are either "natural or acquired"; and he will pass his judgments "by testing the worth of a particular literary product amidst the grand exhibition of age-old masterpieces."<sup>1</sup> These general statements are disconcerting, because they take for granted that the literary critic is in possession of some "inner voice", that he is able to detach himself completely from contemporary taste and create some universal standards of criticism, and that, lastly, all works of art that have survived are "good". Neither of these assumptions, however, is justified. It seems to me that Rabindranath was often deliberately vague when speaking about the kind of person who would be fit to be a critic. Rabindranath's judgment of literature was not based so much on the personality of the critic ( whosoever he may be ) as on the created works themselves. It is not the critical ability of one particular person that matters, but the response to communicated experiences in general. For what is literary criticism, if it is not determined by a wholehearted and unconditional response of the reader to the poet's sensibility? In the following paragraphs some of the points will be discussed that are part of Rabindranath's judgment of literature: tradition, the substance and form of a poem, realism and reality, the part played by nature in poetry, and lastly the authorship of a poem.

When Rabindranath says that works of art should be

1. See : *The Judging of Literature ( from Sahitya )* ; IN : *Vishva-Bharati Quarterly*, I/4, 1906.

judged in comparison with those masterpieces that have survived so far, his standard of criticism is derived from what we commonly call tradition. Does the poem, he asks, conform to tradition and is it part of the cultural continuity of the country? Is the poet aware of the essential identity between the old and the new? In order to be able to answer this question, the critic himself must be part of a continuity of culture; he must surrender himself to the past, not by using the critical formulas of dead critics, but by realizing the stream of tradition in art; for tradition is again a "becoming", the inner rhythm of ever-changing life: "All traditional structure of art must have sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicate or virile; to grow with its growth, to dance with its rhythm. . . . The tradition which is helpful is like a channel that helps the current to flow. It is open where the water runs onward guarding it only where there is danger in deviation."<sup>1</sup>

It is the task of the artist to give wholeness to the fragments of experience and to make the temporary permanent. However, experiences, of whatever kind they may be, are never "new"; even the poet's ideas and emotions can hardly ever claim the virtue of novelty. In what sense then, asks Rabindranath, does a work of art express the consciousness of the artist's personality? Fundamentally the ideas will be found to be the same in all great works of art; ideas become significant only when they express not the facts of experience, but the personality of the author. After the experience has been ordered and organised within the mind of the artist, the expression given to it will be fundamentally his own. The idea after being expressed

1. *Art and Tradition*, IN: Visva-Bharati Quarterly, I/1, 1935.—Contemporary criticism in the West takes up a similar attitude towards tradition. In every work of art the past, the present, and the future are one; every poem is a reflection of cultural continuity: "The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious not of what is dead, but of what is already living." (T. S. Eliot, *Essays*, Tradition and Individual Talent, p. 22.)

no longer belongs to him ; it belongs "to all men". An experience becomes valuable to the reader only if it has been successfully, that is adequately, communicated. The adequacy of a literary communication depends on the ability of the poet to organise his experience. Even the most extraordinary experiences in a poem will find no response if they are expressed in terms of common-place journalism. It is significant that Rabindranath, in the following quotation, insists on the "normality" of the reader ( and, of course, the poet's ) mind. Unless both of them are essentially sane ( that is, emotionally mature ) no adequate response either to the experience itself or to the work of art can be expected. The normality and essential sanity of the artist is, according to Rabindranath, the foundation on which all art is based : "But in all great arts, literary or otherwise, man has expressed his feelings that are *usual* in a form that is *unique and yet not abnormal*. When Wordsworth described in his poem a life deserted by love, he invoked for his art the *usual pathos* expected by all *normal* minds in connection with such a subject. But the picture in which he incarnated the sentiment was unexpected and yet every *sane* reader acknowledges it with joy. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The "organising" of experiences still remains to be explained. The work of an artist is essentially selective ; out of the innumerable possibilities of experience he will select the one which seems to him valuable for communication. In this sense it is not the experience itself he expresses, but his personality, that is his own consciousness of the experience : "As art embodies our personal estimate of a thing, or character, or circumstance, the artist in his work does not follow nature in its capacious heterogeneity, but his own human nature which is selective."<sup>2</sup>

1. *The Religion of an Artist*, Ibid., p. 40. ( Italics mine ).—Exactly the same idea has been expressed by T. S. Elliot, who being a poet himself realized the dangerous implication of abnormality and deliberate eccentricity in poetry : "One error, in fact, of eccentricity in poetry is to seek for new human emotions to express ; and in this search for novelty in the wrong place it discovers the perverse. The business of the poet is not to find new emotions, but to use the ordinary ones and, working them up into poetry, to express feelings which are not in actual emotions at all." ( Ibid., p. 31 ).

2. *The Meaning of Art* ; IN : *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*, IV/1 ( Old Series ) 1926, p. 87.



The "reality" of a work of art is the reality of the artist's personality; the experience, therefore, is only a means towards that end. Art in so far as it imitates nature is an illusion; for what we see in a poem is not nature, but the reflection of the objects of nature on the artist's sensibility. Realism in literature, according to Rabindranath, is a contradiction in terms; art only "seems to be what it is"; it is real in so far as it is "Maya"; for the truth of art is not imitation, but appearance: "To record what is, just as it is, is not literature. Nature reaches me immediately through my senses. Literature has to preserve and convey the original impression. And it is for the literary artist to make up for this lack of immediacy. Here comes in the difference between the truth of nature and the truth of literature . . . That is why literature does not, nor does any art, imitate nature."<sup>1</sup>

Rabindranath's argument does not, of course, exclude Nature from a work of art. The "reality" of a poem consists both in the consciousness of the poet's own personality and in his consciousness of the nature around him. Nature must, in fact, be part of all great poetry, but only in so far as it is reflected in the poet's mind. The famous passage from *Creative Unity* might be mentioned in this connection, where Rabindranath criticises Shakespeare because of "the gulf between Nature and human nature owing to the tradition of his race and time." Shakespeare according to him "fails to recognize the truth of the interpenetration of human life with the cosmic life of the world." In one of Rabindranath's finest critical passages, he defines the difference in the attitude to nature in the East and in the West. "Our relations with Nature," he says, "are like those of brother and sister, while the Englishman of sensibility

1. *The Judging of Literature* (from *Sahitya*) . . Ibid., p. 2.—Coleridge in his famous chapter XV of his *Bibliographia Literaria* comes to exactly the same conclusions: "It has been before observed that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity; or succession to an instant; or lastly when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit."

regards her as a lover."<sup>1</sup> To Rabindranath nature is not merely "matter", it is Reality, that is both form and substance in one. It "exists" only in so far as it enters into the poet's consciousness. It is the principle of integration in all great works of art.

A great poem, therefore, is more than an idea or an emotion expressed in words. It is creation, inevitable as the creations of nature are. The authorship of a poem is irrelevant ; for all great poetry is anonymous, representing as it does the continuity of human culture on the one hand, and the eternal and never-changing reality of experiences, on the other. The work of the greatest genius is akin to folk-poetry ; for in both of them the ultimate experiences of human life have detached themselves from the personality of the poet. Speaking of a folk-song, Rabindranath says in fact : "This poem no doubt owed its form to the touch of the person who produced it ; but at the same time with a gesture of utter detachment, it has transcended its material—the emotional mood of the author. It has gained its freedom from any biographical bondage by taking a rhythmic perfection which is precious in its own exclusive merit."<sup>2</sup>

I have compared Rabindranath's critical statements to both romantic literary criticism and contemporary criticism in England. It is difficult to say whether he belongs to one or the other. His affinities with romantic poetry and criticism and with the idealist school of philosophy are obvious. On the other hand, even a superficial comparison of Rabindranath's criticism with that of T. S. Eliot, who is undoubtedly the most eminent English literary critic of today, shows a remarkable similarity between the two.

1. *The Nexus of Beauty*, Ibid., p. 27.—A good instance to the point would be Wordsworth's *Lucy-poems*.

2. *The Religion of an Artist*, Ibid., p. 42.—This is undoubtedly what T. S. Eliot means when he says : "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion, it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." (Ibid., p. 21.).

Quite apart from the fact that they both established a tradition as poets, their criticism has this in common that it has ceased to be merely "literary" and that it lays stress not on the abstract laws of aesthetics and literature, but on the fundamental human aspects of artistic experience, the personality of the poet, the creative process, tradition, and the response of the reader. It should be borne in mind, however, that unlike modern Western critics, Rabindranath always uses symbolic language in his writings on literature. What he does is indeed an interpretation of symbols in terms of symbols. All I could do was to translate his twice symbolical meaning into the prosaic language of today. A symbol, however, is a delicate and subtle vehicle of literary communication ; it seems to be idly floating on the still surface of language and yet often touches the very essence of our inner being. And while we are still vainly struggling to apprehend its meaning, it bursts open and shows us the inside of language, the "reality" of meaning, the very meaning of meaning. Rabindranath expressed through symbols what modern psychology applied to literary criticism is vainly endeavouring to express through "facts". Appearance, according to Rabindranath, is itself a symbol ; for it symbolizes the reality that is behind and beyond the mere facts of experience.

## A PRE-HISTORIC CRY

By R. K. Prabhu

IN one of his letters written from Shelidah in Bengal to a friend as far back as 22nd June 1892, Rabindranath Tagore narrates the following experience which he went through on that day :

"Early this morning, while still lying in bed, I heard the women at the bathing place, sending forth joyous peals of Ulu ! Ulu ! The sound moved me curiously, though it is difficult to say why.

"Perhaps, such joyful outbursts put one in mind of the great stream of festive activity which goes on in this world, with most of which the individual man has no connection. What an immense world, what a vast concourse of men, yet with how few has one any relationship ! Distant sounds of life, wafted near, bearing the tidings of unknown homes, make the individual realise that the greater part of the world of men does not, cannot, own or know him ; then he feels so deserted, so loosely attached to the world, occupying so little room in so remote a corner ; and a vague sadness creeps over him.

"Thus these cries of Ulu ! Ulu ! made my life, past and future, seem like a long, long road, from the very ends of which these sounds were coming to me. And this feeling colours for me the beginning of my day."

Most non-Bengalee readers are likely to be puzzled by a statement like this from the illustrious poet-philosopher of Bengal. But those, who have lived for any length of time in Bengal and freely mixed with Hindu families, will not be much surprised either at the fact that Bengalee women should be in the habit of uttering a strange cry like *ulu-ulu* or that the poet should have been so deeply moved on hearing the cry. To sojourners in Bengal this cry is a familiar one in the mouths of Hindu women of all classes. They utter the cry in unison on all happy or auspicious occasions like weddings, family worship and congregational poojah in the temples. When the bridegroom arrives at the door of the bride's house for the first time or when the actual wedding ceremony takes place, and on all such other auspicious occasions, the assembled women can be seen jointly making the sound of *ulu-lu-lu* with their tongues. The males are not used to uttering such a cry. On other happy occasions, too, besides wedding time and poojah, the women are in the habit of uttering this quaint cry.

The secretary of Mahatma Gandhi has recorded one such instance which happened during Gandhiji's tour in East Bengal a decade ago. According to Mr. Mahadev Desai, at Malkhanagar in East Bengal, Gandhiji was addressing a women's meeting. He spoke about purity, inward and outward. "Outward purity," he said, "consisted in cleanliness and Khaddar wearing and the inward in chastity, humility and pursuit of truth and non-violence." And as he proceeded to say that Sita was the emblem of both, the listeners, who had till then observed a pin-drop silence, gave a cry *Hulo-loo-loo*—at the mention of the word 'Sita'. Mr. Mahadev Desai remarks, "it is Bengali ladies' auspicious cry and how could they help being touched by the mention of a name they held so sacred?"

Not only in Bengal, but even in Assam, it would appear, one can hear the cry of *ulu-lu* being uttered by Hindu women on auspicious occasions. In the July 1939 issue of the Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society of Bangalore, Dr. S. T. Moses, Director of Fisheries, Baroda, dealing with Frog-folklore, cites a curious instance of the utterance of this cry by certain classes of Assamese women on the occasion of what is known as the "marriage of frogs". This "marriage" is performed when there is drought in the country and rain is badly needed. Two frogs, one supposed to be male and the other female, are brought and the female frog is made to circumambulate the male seven times, while the women dance rhythmically, singing or crying *ulu-lu*. In most places the ceremony consists of a party of females walking in the street, singing the praise of the Rain-god Mehulo, who is supposed to be pleased with the performers of this rite, because the marriage ensured the increase and multiplication of his favourites, the frogs. One member of the party carries on her head a basket with a clay frog, which has three *neem* twigs stuck in. At every house women pour a potful of water on the frog, drenching the bearer as well, and present doles of grain.

It will thus be seen that the cry of *ulu-lu* is in common occurrence in both Bengal and Assam.

Coming to the other provinces of India, though the practice of uttering the cry seems to be unknown to most provinces, traces of the cry in a literary form or in the current vocabulary, can be found almost throughout India.

Taking Andhra first, my attention to the mention of the cry in Telugu literature was accidentally drawn during a recital of a passage from the Telugu Bharat of Tikkana, the greatest poet of Andhra who flourished in the 13th Century A.D. While describing the welcome which was accorded to Sri Krishna when he arrived at Hastinapur on his peace-mission and

approached the palace of the Kauravas, Tikkana uses the word *ulivu* to denote the cries of joy and welcome which were uttered by the assemblage on the occasion. Mr. Unnava Lakshminarayana, Barrister-at-law, the well-known Telugu scholar and author, being requested by me to throw some light on the use of this word *ulivu* in Telugu literature, has been kind enough to give me the following particulars. He writes :

"The word used by Tikkana in the place referred to by you is *ulivu*. This refers to the big sound created by the assemblage at the approach of Sri Krishna. *Ulivu* is used as a noun. In Telugu *vu* is a nominative case-ending of inanimate objects. The root is very likely *uli*. The root is used as a verb also. *Yu* is a verbal ending denoting the infinitive tense. *Uliyu* is used by the same poet as well as the earliest Telugu poet Nannaya, to denote any big sound like that of a Bheri or Dundubhi. *Ulu* is in its root form both a verb and a noun denoting a big sound. This verbal form is used by several modern and ancient Telugu poets. *Uliyu* also denotes 'shaking'—perhaps of shaking sound, as I shall explain later on. *Ulivu* is used by one of the greatest of our modern prose writers, Chinaya Soori, to indicate a loud sound like that of a Brahmani or breeding bull. Our standard dictionaries bear out all that is said above. This is so far as literature goes."

Coming to Karnatak, we find a number of Kanarese words, apparently derived from a root-word like *uli* or *ul* and signifying a cry or noise made by mouth or otherwise. Substantive nouns like *uli*, *ulipu*, *ulipa*, *ulivu*, *uluwu*, *uluhu*, all meaning a cry, a sound, a word, or speech, are common in Halegannada or Old Kanarese and have been widely used by both ancient and modern Kanarese poets and authors like Jaimini and Muddana. There is also the word *old*, which is a variant of the word *uli* and which means the crying or chirping of birds. There is another word in Kanarese *old*, meaning a fire-place, which is derived from the root *ul*, signifying "to be hot". In this connection it may be noted that there is an archaic Sanskrit root-form *ul* meaning "to burn", from which words like *ulka*, a meteor or fire-brand, and *ulmuka*, a fire-brand or torch, are derived by some authorities. The Sanskrit lexicon *Shabdakalpadruma*, however, derives these words from the root *ush*, to burn, which is still met with in the words *ushna*, *ushman* and *Ushman*. Lastly, there is the common Kanarese word *alu* (with a cerebral consonant 'la'), meaning "to cry, weep".

In Tamil, too, we find the word *oli*, meaning a big sound. There is another word in Tamil, *oli* which signifies light. Whether the latter word has anything to do with the Sanskrit root word, *ul*, which means, "to burn", is more than one can say.

In Malayalam, the language of Kerala, there is the word *uli*, which means big sound or cry.

In Tulu, we have *bulu* and *bulupu*, both of which mean "to cry".

All these five languages, namely Telugu, Kanarese, Tamil, Malayalam and Tulu, are Dravidian, that is to say, non-Sanskritic languages. Yet, as we have seen, all of them have words strangely similar to the Sanskrit word *ulu*.

Coming to the dialects of Sanskrit, we have already seen how the actual Sanskrit word *ulu* is still in current use in Bengalee, along with its variant, *hulu-loo-loo*.

In Gujarati and Marathi, we have the word *hullad*, meaning a shout, or noise, from which the later meaning of an affray or, as they say *mārā-māri*, has been derived.

In Hindi, the equivalent word is *hullar*, which also means noise, as well as riot, as in the case of the Gujarati and Marathi word, *hullad*.

In Konkani, which is also a dialect of Sanskrit, there are at least two words, which show close affinity to *ulu*. First, there is the word *huel*, which means a shout. This word is in common use in Goa, Sawantwadi and other Konkani-speaking tracts of Northern Konkan, but is not to be found in the vocabulary of the Konkani-speaking people in Kanara. Whether this word is derived from or cognate to the Sanskrit word *ulu*, it is difficult to say. Some derive *huel* from the onomatopoeic word *hui*, which signifies a cry of that sound, but whether this is correct to do, one cannot say with certainty. Then, there is the word *ullo* in Konkani, primarily meaning a shout, and secondarily, the distance covered by a shout. Seemingly this word is derived from the Konkani verb *ullayi*, meaning to speak, which in its turn is derived from the Sanskrit root-words *up-lap*, meaning to speak. But whether actually the word *ullo* is so derivable or whether it has anything to do with the Sanskrit word *ulu*, meaning a cry or shout, can be decided only by competent philologists.

From the current use of the word *ulu* and its derivatives and variants in the various provinces of India and the modern practice of crying *ulu-ulu* by women in Bengal and Assam, let me hark to the olden days and try to find out if the cry and the word were known to people in this country in those days too. As I have already pointed out, the use of the words *uli* and *ulivu* in the sense of a cry, a speech or a loud sound, is common in both old Telugu and Kannada literatures. In old Bengalee works too, one finds frequent use made of the word *uli*. In the Bengalee version of Mahabharata by Kashiramdas, a poet who flourished about 300 years ago, we come across the word *uli* or *ulu* more than once. For example, in the

Ashwamedha Parva of this Bengalee Bharata it is stated that when the sacred horse was about to be sent out on its career of world-wide conquest, Kunti, the mother of the Pandavas, Gandhari, the wife of King Dhritarashtra, and other ladies of the royal family decorated the animal with ornaments and uttered cries of *ulu* as it started. The exact words used by the Bengalee poet are *hula-huli*. Similarly, in another old Bengali poetical work dealing with Arjuna's peregrinations it is stated that when Janā, the spouse of Neeladhwaaja, king of Mahishmati, sent out her son Praveera to fight Arjuna, she uttered cries of *ulu*, both as an encouragement to him and as an augury of good luck and victory.

If you ask any ordinary Bengalee gentleman to explain to you the exact significance of the strange cry of *ulu* uttered by the women of his province, he will tell you merely that it is an expression of the joy felt by the orier and of welcome to or reverence towards the person or object in view. But if you ask him since when Bengalee women have been uttering this cry and what was its origin, he would express total ignorance on the subject.

It would be my endeavour in this paper to show that the seemingly strange cry which Bengalee women are accustomed to utter at weddings, poojah time and other happy and auspicious occasions, has a very ancient past and a truly pre-historic origin.

If you turn to the third Adhyāya of the Chhandogya Upaniṣad, you will see it end with the following passage :

"Aditya is Brahman, this is the doctrine, and this is the fuller account of it. In the beginning this was non-existent. It became existent, it grew. It turned into an egg. The egg lay for the time of a year. The egg broke open . . . . And what was born from it was Aditya, the sun. When he was born shouts of *ululu* arose, and all beings arose, and all things which they desired. Therefore, when the sun arises and sets, shouts of *ululu* arise, and all beings arise, and all things which they desire. If anyone knowing this meditates on the sun as Brahman, pleasant shouts ( *ghoshāh* ) will approach him and will continue, yea, they will continue."

From this passage you will see that even so far back as the days of the Upaniṣad, which must be at least eight or nine centuries before the Christian era, the cry of *ululu* was known to and in common use among the people at large. The cry of *ululu* in this Upaniṣad takes the form of a loud greeting to the sun, uttered by a whole assemblage of people waiting to see him rise up above the horizon at the end of a year-long period. What exactly the sunrise at the end of a year-long period may signify, we shall see later on.



Harking still further back, we find that even in the Atharva Veda there is a distant reference to this cry. In the 6th verse of the 19th Sukta of the 3rd Kanda of this Veda, which is designated as a hymn designed "to help friends against enemies", we read : "Let their horses be excited, O Maghavan, let the noise of the conquering heroes arise, let the noises, the *ululus* go up severally, let the divine Maruts with Indra as their chief, go with the army."

Here you will see that the word *ululayah* is associated with the word "ghoshāh" meaning noises and, therefore, there can be no doubt that *ululaya* too, like the word *ululava*, meant a noise, which was obviously made by the mouth. *Ululaya* is thus clearly a variant of *ululava*. Whitney has translated the word *ululayah* here by *halloos*. Whether the exact sound was *halloo-haloo* or *ulu-ulu*, there seems to be little reason to doubt that it was a cry made by the mouth. And it is also quite clear that both the Atharva and Chhandogya passages had the same cry in view.

Looking through the Rg Veda, though the actual word *ululu* does not appear to figure in it anywhere, there is a passage in the 103rd Sukta of the X Mandala which seemingly has this cry or shout of *ululu* in view. This passage, which has reference to the progress of Indra's chariot, runs as follows:

"Exoite, Maghavan, my weapons, ( exoite ) the spirits of my heroes ; slayer of Vritra, let the speed of the horses be accelerated, let the noises of the conquering chariots be increased."

The use here of the word "ghoshāh" in connection with the progress of Indra's chariot will recall to mind immediately the passage from the Atharva Veda just quoted, wherein too "ghoshāh" are mentioned in connection with Indra's horses and, therefore, it will not be too far-fetched a suggestion to make that in all probability the Rg-Vedic poet had the *ululu* shouts in view. But, even if he had some other cry than *ululu* in view, it can be confidently asserted that at least in the days of the Atharva Veda the cry of *ululu* was well known and in current use.

From all that I have so far stated, it will be seen that the cry of *ululu* or *ulu* has been in common use in this country since the earliest days of the Vedas down to the present day and that in places where the actual use of that cry has gone out of practice through one cause or other, traces of the original cry are still to be found in the vocabularies of most of the principal languages of modern India, including those of non-Sanskritic origin, like Telugu, Kanarese, Tamil, Malayalam and Tulu.

I now propose to take you out of India, to the countries of Europe, to show to you that this strange cry was apparently known to

most of the nations of Europe too and is to be found in the vocabularies of these nations and that there is, therefore, every reason to surmise that the cry is a heritage from the remotest past of humanity, being truly of pre-historic origin.

Taking English first, in the current English language you will find words like *ululant*, *ululative*, *ululation* and *ululating*, derived from the verb *ululate*, which means to call loudly, to howl, to hoot.

The corresponding French verb is *ululer*, to howl like a dog or wolf ; Old French *huller* ; Italian *ululare*, Latin, *ululo*, Spanish and Portuguese *ulular*. In Lithuanian *ululo* means "they shout", while in the Norsk languages *ul* is a word which means, a hoot or hooting, and *ulaat*, a discordant noise or noises. In Greek, there is the word *Alle-louia*, meaning praise, particularly in a loud tone. The Hebrew word *Hallelujah*, of which the other form is *Halleluiah*, and which is understood by most writers to signify "praise ye Jehovah," is obviously akin to the Greek, Latin and Lithuanian words quoted above. Hebrew scholars, however, derive *Hallelu* from *Hillel*, to praise. But such a derivation does not carry us far, for it raises the question of the derivation of the word *Hillel* itself. I think we shall not be far wrong if we assume that the origins of both the Greek and Hebrew words are to be traced to the same source, namely an onomatopoeic word of pre-historic origin like *ul* or *ulu*.

Leaving aside this word, however, we have seen that *ululu* of Vedic origin has its counterparts in almost all the European languages and especially in those which have linguistic affinity with the Sanskrit language.

But, it may be pointed out that while the Sanskrit word *ulu* has the meaning of a shout or cry of a glad nature, the words in the European languages almost all signify a howl, a hoot, or a discordant cry. In this connection, it is relevant to note that there is another word in Sanskrit, namely *ula*, which occurs in the Atharva Veda in the company of the names of beasts of prey, such as lion, tiger, wolf, etc., and which, therefore, appears to have been the name of some wild animal. So some might be disposed to link this word with the words in the European languages, already mentioned, which signify a hoot or howl. As to this, it requires to be pointed out that the word shows a greater affinity to the English word *howl*, Mid-English *houlen*, Dutch *hulien*, German *heulen*, and Greek *hulao*. This affinity raises the suspicion whether the Sanskrit word and its European equivalents might not have been derived from some animal cry like *ul-ul* and that later the word came to signify both the animal making the cry and the cry or shout in general.

Whatever the explanation, there appears to be little reason to doubt

the hoary antiquity of the word *ul* and its derivative *ulu* in the sense of a cry or shout. It might be that with some sections of humanity like the Indo-Aryans, the word became, in course of time, an expression of joy, while with the European races it acquired the character of an angry howl or hoot.

It should be stated, however, that a closer examination of the European vocabularies shows that the associations connected with the cries like *ulu* were not always those of anger, displeasure or discordance, as one might be led to think from the significance which the words like *ululare*, *ululer*, etc., now bear. It appears to me that there is one other word in the European languages which shows as great affinity to the Sanskrit *ulu* as the ones I have already mentioned. This is the word *yule*.

*Yule*, in ordinary parlance, stands for Christmas Day or the Christmas Season, but its origin is seen to be one of much uncertainty. It is a word in common use in Scotland, its variant being *yole*. Its equivalents in old English are stated to be *iula*, *geola*, *geol*, *gehhol*, and *gehhel*; in Icelandic, *jol*; Swedish, *jul*; Danish, *juul*. In Scotland, *yule* was the name given to the two months of the year, December and January, the one the "former yule"; and the other, the "after yule", as coming before and after the winter solstice. Now, according to A. Fick, a German authority who is preferred by Skeat, the proper meaning of the word *yule* is noise, clamour, the season being one of rejoicing at the turning of the year among the Scandinavian peoples before Christian times. In this connection, Skeat refers to the Mid-English, *goulen*, *gollen*, meaning, to lament loudly; English, *yawl*; Anglo-Saxon, *gylan*, to make merry, to keep festival; Icelandic *yla*, to howl, make a noise; German, *jolen*, *johlen*, *jodeln*, to sing in a high-pitched voice. From this word comes (through the French) *jolly*.

On the other hand, in the opinion of Dr. Robert Gordon Latham, the compiler of "A Dictionary of the English Language", the word *yule*, is cognate with the Anglo-Saxon word *heol*, Norse, *hjul*, or wheel, the reference being to the turn of the year. The wheel, as is well known, is also one of the ancient symbols of the Sun and the old English word *heol* or *hiawl* or *huul* has come to signify the sun itself.

But there is one additional factor in connection with this word *yule*, to which I wish to draw pointed attention. And it is this. There is plenty of evidence to show that the word *yule* and variants of it in the forms of *yole* and *ule* were actually uttered as cries at the celebrations of the Yule or Christmas.

Dr. Murray in his "New English Dictionary" gives several instances of such use. A text dated 1546 says: "It is easy to cry ule at other men's cost."

In another text of the year 1568 we come across the phrase "to cry yule" ( or hailrule ).

Again, in a work dated 1661 we read, "In Yorkshire and our Northern parts, they have an old Custom, after sermon or service on Christmas day, the people will even in the churches cry Vle Vle and the common people run about the streets singing Ule, Ule, Ule, Three Puddings in a Pole, crack nuts and cry Ule."

Again, in a work dated 1737 by an author named Ramsay, we read : "It is either crying yool on another man's stool."

Lastly, in his work dated 1853, a writer named W. Sandys, dealing with Christmastide, observes : "In some places it seems to have been the custom to dance in the country churches, after prayers, crying out Yole, Yole, Yole, etc."

Now, in connection with this Yule I would like you to note that, as already pointed out, it stands for Christmas as well as the season at the turning of the year near the winter solstice—a season which saw the nativity of Sol Invictus—the Unconquerable Sun, which nativity was later transformed into the nativity of Christ by the early fathers of the Christian Church. The pagan festivities in connection with the nativity of the ancient Sun-god were adopted, with necessary modification, by these early fathers of the Church, and the lighting of the Yule-log and the bonfires at the solemn hour of the midnight of Christmas Eve, the cries of Hallelujah and Yole, Yole and the carols in the early hours of the morn to announce the glad tidings of the birth of the Divine Child, are all reminiscent of the birth of Sol Invictus, the divine Sun-child, at the time of the winter solstice. I would draw your attention to the remarkable similarity of the circumstances in which the cry of Ululu in the Ohhandogya Upanishad was uttered and those in which the cries of Yole, Yule or Ule Ule, used to be uttered in the British Isles at Christmas. Both, apparently, had the same period of the year in view, namely, the advent of a New Year. Christmas, of course, is immediately precedent to the New Year beginning. If you will recall to mind the passage from the Ohhandogya Upanishad which I have already quoted, you will notice that the birth or reappearance of the Sun after a year-long period is clearly indicated. It was, therefore, not a daily sunrise, but an annual one. Now, such an annual sunrise is to be witnessed only in the Circumpolar regions of this earth. As pointed out by me in a Paper read before the Anthropological Society of Bombay in 1938, the nativity celebrated in the Christmas festival can be shown to have had a truly Circumpolar origin and background, being the nativity of the Midnight-Sun of the Arctic regions.

That the sunrise which was greeted with shouts of *uluka* by man and beast, as described in the Ohhandogya was a truly polar sunrise will be clear if one further scrutinises the chapter of this Upaniṣad in which the description of this particular sunrise occurs.

This Adhyaya of the Ohhandogyopaniṣad is devoted to the elucidation of what is characterised in the Upaniṣad itself as a Secret Doctrine of the Veda. It proceeds to describe the Sun's movements in a manner which is strange and suggestive of movements totally dissimilar to the movements which we see him perform daily in the tropics. It is stated therein that during the first stage, which is the regime of the Vasus, the sun rises in the East and sets in the West. During the second stage, which is the regime of the Rudras, the sun rises in the South and sets in the North for twice the length of the period of the first stage. During the third stage, which is the regime of the Adityas, the sun rises in the West and sets in the East for twice the length of the period of the second stage. During the fourth stage, which is the regime of the Maruts, he rises in the North and sets in the South for twice the length of the period of the third stage. During the fifth stage, which is the regime of the Sadhyas, the sun rises above and sets below for twice the length of the period of the fourth stage.

After this, there occurs the following extraordinary statement : "After rising upwards he neither rises nor sets. He is alone as it were, standing in the centre and on this there is this verse :—'Yonder, he neither rises nor sets at any time. If this is not true, ye gods, may I lose Brahman ! And, indeed, for him who knows this Brahmopaniṣad ( or Secret Doctrine of the Veda ) the sun does not rise and does not set. To him there is day, once and for all'."

Nothing can be more graphically explicit than this record of a phenomenon which, as I shall show presently, could have been witnessed nowhere else in the world save in the Circumpolar regions. It must appear incredible to people living in the tropical and temperate regions of the earth that the sun could ever rise in the West and set in the East in total variance of the daily phenomenon that we are accustomed to see. I too was disposed to regard the Upaniṣadic statement just quoted, that the sun rose in the West and set in the East, to be merely a flight of the imagination on the part of the Vedic author. But here is a strange confirmation that I came across while reading the work entitled "On the Top of the World : The Soviet Expedition to the North Pole 1937", By L. Brontman. ( Edited by Academician O. J. Schmidt, leader of the Soviet Expedition to the Pole and published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., in 1938 ). On page 82 of this work appears the following statement : "Midnight came. And there to the

North-West, almost directly in front of us, the Sun rose. We were the only people on earth to see this marvellous phenomenon. The sun rising in the West! Such a thing happens only in the Arctic. We were drawing near to the region of the Polar day, where the sun never sets throughout the summer."

This was the phenomenon which the Soviet Expedition saw on April 18, 1937, while approaching Rudolf Land situated about 82° North Latitude. The Expedition reached the North Pole on 25th May and here is a statement appearing on page 148, describing their experience on the top of the world: "We lost all consciousness of time. It was light all the 24 hours. Whatever the time, the sun was always at the same height, there was neither East nor West nor North. Everywhere, in all directions, on all sides, there was only South. Often when we woke up we would wonder: is it 4 a.m. or p.m.?"

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the ancient Egyptians too had inherited a hoary tradition, which they communicated to Herodotus, when this father of History visited the land of the Pharaohs, namely that the sun had four times deviated from his regular course, having twice risen in the West and twice set in the East.

You will thus see that the Upanishadic statements that the Sun rose in the West and set in the East and that later he rose upwards and ceased to rise and set any more and that he shone thereafter perpetually, are not contrary to fact, but can now be demonstrated to be well based. From the deadly earnestness of the earlier traditional statement quoted by the Upanishadic sage, namely, "Yonder, he neither rises nor sets at any time. If this is not true, ye gods, may I lose Brahman", it becomes obvious that the memory of the Sun-god of the Polar regions, who, unlike his counterpart in the tropical regions, shone perpetually, persisted through ages and was treasured up by the Vedic sages as a sacred heritage, a secret doctrine, to be denied only at one's peril. The very next passage in the Upanishad describes how this Brahmapanishad or Secret Doctrine of the Ever-lasting Day was handed down by Brahma to Prajapati, by Prajapati to Manu, and by Manu to his descendants and so on, from generation to generation, till at last Uddalaka Aruneya, of the days of the Ohhandogya Upanishad, came by it.

The Adhyaya then closes with the statement already quoted by me, namely that when the cosmic egg, which "lay for the time of a year", broke open, Aditya, the sun, was born and that he was greeted by man and beast with continued shouts of *ululu*.

I have not so far discussed the question of the origin of the word

*ulu* itself. The question can be satisfactorily solved only by expert philologists. Apparently, the word is derived from the root-word *ul*. According to the well-known cyclopaedic work, *Shabdakalpadruma*, the original root-form which, by the grammatical transformation known as "samprasarana", is changed into *ul*, is the verb *val*. In Prof. Macdonnell's Sanskrit-English Dictionary the following meanings are given to this verb *val* ; (1) to turn ; turn round, turn to ; (2) to return home ; (3) to depart, to go away again ; (4) to break forth, appear ; past participle, *valita*, turned, bent, having departed, broken forth. If we accept as well-based both the affinity between the root-forms *ul* and *val* and the meanings assigned to the latter by Prof. Macdonnell, the significance of the cry *ululu* at sunrise becomes doubly clear. The cry was indicative of not only a feeling of joy, but also of a suggestion on the part of the crier that a physical object, like the sun, was rising up and putting in its appearance. It might have been somewhat like a shout : "It is rising ! It is rising !" or "It is appearing ! It is appearing !"

Further, seeing that the root word *ul* has also the meaning in Sanskrit of burning or being alight, seeing also that in Sumerian and Akkadian languages words like *udu* and *alala* stand for the Sun ; and seeing further, that even in Scandinavian languages, *hial* or *huul*, from which the word *yule* is derived, signifies the sun, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the words *ul* and *ulu* must have, at a very early stage, come to signify also the solar orb—it being the one object par excellence that burned or lighted up things as no other object did. If my inference is right, the close connection between the appearance of the sun and the cry of *ululu*, as in the *Chhandogya*, becomes easy of understanding. It also helps us to understand why there should have been the old custom of people crying *ule, ule, ule* or *yole, yole, yole*, after the Christmas service, a service, which we know, was held to celebrate the birth of Christ, the prototype of the ancient Sun-god or Sun-child of the land of the Midnight Sun.

Critics who have no faith in the theory of the Circumpolar Home of the Indo-European branch of the human race may brush aside that theory, but few will gainsay, I hope, from the material I have placed before them, that there is every reasonable ground to surmise that the cry of *ulu-ulu*, which we find still current among Bengalee women at wedding time and such other happy and auspicious occasions, is a cry of truly pre-historic origin.

Since this paper was read by me, before the Anthropological Society of Bombay on 18 December 1939, a custom somewhat strangely similar to that of Bengalee women uttering the cry of *ulu-ulu* at wedding-time

has been found by me to prevail among the Baghdadi Jews in Bombay. At their weddings in the synagogues, when the bride is about to be given away and also when, after the wedding, the party of the bridegroom arrives at the door of the wife's house, the women present utter jointly the cry of *Kille-le-le-le* continuously for some time. On inquiry I learn that this cry is meant to ward off evil from, and to bring good luck to, the newly-weds. Seeking for the origin of the custom, I was informed that, according to one tradition, the cry was first uttered by the women present when Leah, the elder daughter of Laban, the maternal uncle of the Biblical Jacob, was being surreptitiously palmed off by Laban on Jacob, in place of Rachael, the younger daughter, whom Jacob really loved and whose hand he had demanded after serving Laban, according to contract, for seven long years for the purpose. The women who knew the secret are said to have made the sound to give a broad hint to Jacob of the trick that was being played on him. Since then, according to the tradition, this cry has come into vogue at Jewish weddings—first as a means of warding off evils of every sort from the couple about to launch on matrimony and later as an expression of felicitations to, and good wishes for, the future of the couple. It may be observed that this custom obtains only among the Jewish immigrants from Baghdad and other parts of Iran, but it is not found among the Bene-Israel, the indigenous Marathi-speaking Jewish community of Western India.



## WHEN THE MASTER WEPT

By Gurdial Mallik

It was 25th July, 1941.

Gurudeva wept. But his tears were those of divine tenderness, such as, they say, the Perfect Men dwelling on the hoary heights of the Himalayas shed whenever there is a parting between two true lovers.

And was he also not going away—albeit temporarily as he in his spiritual vision rightly understood, but for ever for those of fleshly eyes,—from the large family whom he had reared with his own life-blood ?

His silent tears brought before my mind's eye the scene in the distant though rosy past, when the sage Kanwa wept at the departure of Sakuntala from the forest hermitage for her husband's home.

And, pray, why did Gurudeva,—the sage Kanwa of the modern age,—weep ? Because he *knew* that he would not visit again, in his present physical body, his Sakuntala,—the Santiniketan Asrama.

Was his weeping an exhibition of any emotional weakness ? The rational mind replied, "Yes", but the answer of the spirit was different and more satisfying. It countered the above question with another, "Why do the snow-clad, stately and serene Alps thaw when the rays of the sun kiss their cloud-caressed peaks ?"

Yes, Gurudeva knew the meaning of Death and therefore of Life abundant and abiding, which careers on from fulfilment to fulfilment. And surely Death is but a temporary trough between two wave-crests on the bosom of the boundless ocean of consciousness.

And yet he wept. He wept because he was intensely human,—a very prince among the humans,—one who cared

little or nothing for the pure joys of Paradise, where perhaps every thing is obtained and every truth understood without tears.

It was this deep-rooted humanity of his which invested his fragrant soul and sublimely beautiful face and figure with the aura and aspect of divinity. He was like one of the gods of old who walked with men.

Had he pursued the selfish path of personal salvation,—some holy people have been heard saying at times,—Gurudeva would have, during his last earthly existence, perhaps attained to freedom from the revolving wheel of re-births. But he preferred to be with and of his fellow-men, for on the tablet of his heart God had inscribed the law,—the only law,—of the Kingdom of Heaven “My brother and I are one.”

Or, as the materialists wished, had Gurudeva chosen to stay alone in the ivory tower of Art or dwell in isolation on the island of lotus-eating luxury, he would have been one of the bejewelled princes of the world, who dazzle the deluded with their foolish and futile splendour.

But he decided to tread the rose-interwoven thorny road of the Buddha : of renunciation which rests on the bed-rock of bondages, fashioned in the burning furnace of fellow-feeling and fullness of love.

And so he had wept, within my remembrance, on two other occasions as well : Once when he was cut to the quick after hearing the hair-raising, harrowing tale of inhuman atrocities committed in the Punjab during April 1919 ; and again, in the sad hour which brought to him the heart-rending tidings of the passing away of his grandson in the prime of life,—a life packed with promise of great achievements.

Nay, Gurudeva wept in dignified silence every time, anywhere in the wide wide world, the Trinity,—of the True, the Good and the Beautiful,—was insulted by some power-mad, profit-motived individual, class or nation.

For, was his soul not like the seismograph which registered

every tremor of pain which passed through the heart of Humanity ?

Gandhiji once called Gurudeva "The Great Sentinel". And verily he was a glorious sentinel who always stood alert on the frontier which divides Right from Wrong, Love from Hatred, Compassion from Passion, the Invisible from the Visible, the Formless from Form, the Divine from the Human.

So whenever Gurudeva shed tears, his were tears hot with his love of humanity, and yet touched with the whiff of Wisdom which blows from the shore of Eternal Truth.

## A NOTE ON "LAST WRITINGS"\*

By Amiya Chakravarty

*Shesh Lekhā*, a collection of thirteen poems and two songs, mostly written in his last illness, belongs to the high meridian of Rabindranath's verse. Darkness may yet linger in our sight but even in our sorrow we enter the mid-day as we read these poems. The great world opens there before our view.

No literature offers a level where such vision has been rendered into art. Neither do we consider it possible now to assess poetry so inlaid with beauty, so bare and original in its design.

Some points can be touched upon, particularly in considering the central theme of *prāna* which is more than life, being the sustaining principle of life. The lyrics of *Shesh Lekhā* begin where life-and-death seem to end in a renewal of *prāna*.

*On the bank of Rup-Narain<sup>1</sup>*

*I arise, awake :*

*This world, I realise,*

*Is not a dream.*

In the early dawn of thirteenth May Rabindranath wrote this lyric. He was then in much pain. What awakening is this? Some final touch of being, not known before, comes to him in pain's revelation. The world is there, but transformed, and made more real. The screen of death, which obscures life's vision, is pierced.

*In words writ in blood I saw*

*My being manifest,*

\**Shesh Lekhā* ("Last writings"), September 1941.

1. Name of a river in Bengal; also meaning, literally, "Form of the human divine". Poem No. 11.

*My own self I knew  
Through hurt's hard knocking,  
And in pain.<sup>1</sup>*

"This life," he says, "is death's long *tapasya*<sup>2</sup> through suffering. But when the *tapasya* is fulfilled, and suffering transcended, what is it that *prāna* holds before the view ?

Glimpses of the *prānic* sight are given in the poems. We are shown "the moving screen of varied fears":<sup>3</sup> Our passions become a distant procession. From some point of life's transcendence the poet speaks of

*Death's skilful handiwork wrought in scattered gloom.<sup>4</sup>*

*Prāna* is not described ; but the vision that has come when the poet has known it anew through final suffering, is given in various ways. Our experiences meet in a tapestry, beautiful to the eye that can view it objectively. Of our thoughts are woven this art, with colours as our feelings and dreams. In the background is a constellated darkness ; sometimes, the sunny air : the Earth is seen with its answering gift of fruits and flowers. *Prāna* reveals itself in endless "first love".<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes the skies of creation, the inner and the external sky, are the emblem. On the outer sky the pageantry moves of transient delusions, there we are led by "the Guileful One", and we are enmeshed in life-and-death. We lose our way. The mockery of such experience and the stain of dust none can altogether escape. But we can at last look at it as a play, enjoying the movement even when we suffer from life's deceits. In the last poem<sup>6</sup> we are told of this and then suddenly our mind turned towards the interior sky, all lit up with stars.

1. *Ibid.*

2. "*Tapasya*" is untranslatable, it signifies the travail of spiritual realisation, willingly accepted by the seeker of fulfilment, and is associated with physical suffering. The word "*tapā*" conveys the idea of fire and heat ; hence, its application to the process of spiritual purification, and enlightenment.

3. Poem No. 14.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Poem No. 7.

6. Poem No. 15.

*Your planet there  
Points to him the path,  
The way of his heart  
Ever lucid  
Which simple faith  
Makes eternally shine.<sup>1</sup>*

In both sky-ways we travel till, finally, the interior one is taken, and we move on bearing our gifts. The game has been played with life and death ; and "the Beguiling One" crowns the victor :

*He who has easefully borne your deceit  
Gets from your hand  
The unwasting right of peace.<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> These were the last three lines by the poet, dictated, after a pause, to complete his final poem.

In another poem<sup>3</sup> the words "This my mind knows is true" comes as a refrain, confirming that death is but a fact, it may veil life's truths again and again, but our *prāna*, the inmost being, is unaffected. The moments there remain eternal, enshrining the love we have known, the *amrita*<sup>4</sup> that we have tasted on Earth. "This my mind knows is true." No power of darkness, or the merely material, can rob us of what is real, "such a robber does not exist". Death alone assumes a changeless mask in the outer world of change ; death is unreal. The poet has known the world's reality, beyond death's reach ; in his "I", the supreme "I" has borne witness to this knowledge. "This my mind knows is true." Here the music is the argument, and it is *prāna's* music which blows through our life, making us touch the beyond and also to savour our own and the world's truth.

1. *Ibid.*

2. Poem No. 16.

3. Poem No 2.

4. "The food of the gods".

Transcendence does not mean minimising of our experiences but a clearer view of their reality.

On another page<sup>1</sup> will be found a poem which takes the form of life's question. "Who are you," asks life, as it were, of itself; the first day's Sun utters it. And then, after years have passed, the question is repeated at the western sea-shore, in the evening. The answer itself is conveyed through the questioning; ripples reach our consciousness through the great silence, as an echo to its being. Words have stopped in front of some vast meaning to which we are led.

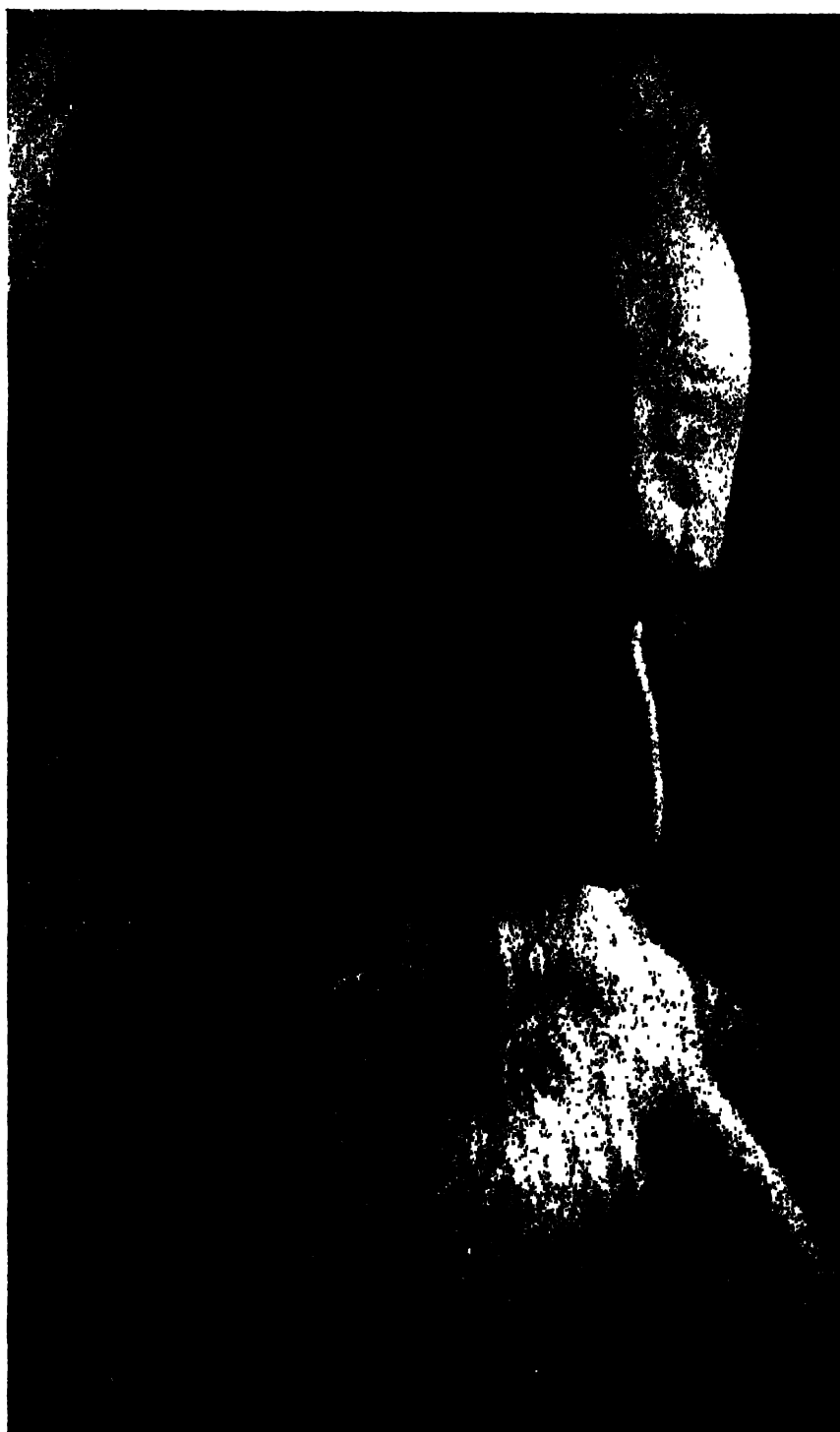
Thus, in different poems, we are brought before the realisation of *prāna* which is simple, and resonant with music. We see with the light that is lighted for us by these delicately austere lyrics, in which beauty shines unadorned.

From his earliest writings Rabindranath has viewed life through the window of death, but in *Shesh Lekhā* death is a particular and conscious fact, and the colours that it brings to an evening horizon had not been there before in his writings. The *free verse*, often employed in these poems is even more structural in its reticence, corresponding to "pure form", than in the new technique employed in other books of the latest phase. There is more sense of space within its deliberately chosen limits.<sup>2</sup> Evidently, both in form and in the supreme vision which the hours brought to him, extreme clarity was the objective. No definition is possible of poems such as these because, ultimately—and artistically—they define themselves.

1. Page 86 of this issue of *Visva-Bharati Quarterly*.

2. Poem number 18 is the supreme example; it is the shortest piece—of eleven lines (only thirty words)—in the book.

Errata : Page 89, last line of 8rd para, read *seems* for *seem*. Page 90, line 5, close inverted commas after *suffering*; line 16, last word should be *is*, not *are*; last but one line, insert *is* between the last two words. Page 90, line 16, delete *is*.







## REVIEWS

### *NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA :*

Compiled by Z. A. Ahmad, B. Sc., Ph. D. ( Kitabistan,  
Allahabad, Pp. 299. Price : Rs. 2/8/- ).

THIS is a symposium of the views of twenty-three representatives of Indian culture, like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal, Dr. Zakir Hussain, on the controversial question of having a common language for our country for the purpose of promoting healthy and harmonious nationhood. As is well known, so far there have been three principal schools of thought in the field which have supported, with a wealth of many-sided and cogent arguments, the rival claims of Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani respectively. The advocates of the first, it would seem, are mostly governed by the past, those of the second by the immediate ( political ? ) present, while those who plump for Hindustani have an eye to the future. But if history be any reliable guide in understanding the evolutionary process in language then, perhaps, before long the palm will go to Hindustani, if at all we must have a *lingua franca*. For, such is the assimilative genius of India that in due course the people would express themselves through a medium which is a synthesis of the languages spoken by the two major communities in the country.

Now here it is that a well-nigh insuperable difficulty rears its ugly head. The South is familiar neither with Hindi nor with Urdu. What common language are its people to learn ? Common sense would say that they should learn Hindi because, like the several languages which they speak at present, it has also its roots in Sanskrit. But if it is highly Sanskritised Hindi then the purpose in view would be defeated inasmuch as they would not be able to communicate with a majority of their compatriots in the North. If, therefore, they learn Hindustani the objective would be attained. But will they take to it easily ? It is to save them from the strain of learning a language which is quite new to them, that some people have opined that as they know English already, in addition to their own mother-tongue, therefore English may be adopted for inter-provincial communication. This argument can be countered by the fact that as the percentage of the people in the North who know English is far smaller than that in the South, their mutual communication would not be much facilitated through the medium of English. Furthermore, the

percentage of the people in the whole country, who have learnt English, is also very low, if not negligible.

Again, there is the equally controversial question of script. The Hindi School is for Devnagri, the Urdu School for Persian, while the Hindustani School is for a study of both, or if only one script is to be learnt then for Roman.

Then, there are the various minorities in the country which speak languages of their own, and to which Hindi, Urdu or Hindustani is like Greek or Latin. What about them ?

What of the risk involved in forcing the evolution of a common language in the name of nationhood which is bound to retard the development of the different provincial literatures in accordance with their own genius ?

Thus, it will be seen that the question of a *lingua franca* bristles with many and serious difficulties. But, again, if the Oracle of History were to be consulted, then with a voice vibrant with vision, he will say : India's age-long mission and message is to find unity in diversity, to be a veritable Visva-Bharati. So only one common language need not be among the constituents of its unity. Look at Switzerland or the U. S. S. R. ; they are the sign-posts to the future.

The Editor and the Publishers are to be congratulated on this excellent symposium of views on a controversial problem of such far-reaching significance for the future of Indian national consciousness. It may be well here to draw the attention of the readers to a letter by Mahatma Gandhi in the *Vishal-Bharat* for November 1941, in which he considers that his views as represented in the symposium have suffered from an unfortunate misquotation.

G. M.

### SRI AUROBINDO'S "THE LIFE DIVINE".

—A Brief Study : By V. Chandrasekharam. ( Sri Aurobindo  
Library, 12, Kondi Chetty Street, G. T., Madras. Pp. 105.  
Price Rs. 1/7/- )

WHEN Romain Rolland said on one occasion that Sri Aurobindo Ghosh "holds in his hand, in firm unrelaxed grip, the bow of creative energy", what he probably meant was that the illumined seer knows the secret of divinising life. For, it is this secret which now has been revealed to humanity in his *magnum opus*, "The Life Divine" ( in two volumes ). The present

volume is a brief study in simplifying for the layman, the thesis and technique of the great philosopher.

Sri Aurobindo's thesis is : "The Gnostic Individual would be the crown and fulfilment of evolutionary Nature", and the technique for compassing this aim is the contacting of the Super-Mind through the energising, enlarging and integrating of consciousness, that consciousness "of which intuition is only a sharp edge or intense projected ray". For, as he adds, "It is in the global and integral vision of the Super-Mind that we can escape from the oppositions of all partial views ( such as opposition of Spirit and Matter, Good and Evil ; the One and the Many ; the individual and the universal ) and come into possession of the Supreme Truth".

But it is not an escape, in any sense, from life and its manifold kinships and claims ; on the contrary, what he aims at is "an integral fulfilment and not a saving of the soul by a rejection of Nature". "It is to become subtle and sensitive to a deeper range of Reality." And it is to awaken humanity to this divine destiny that it is at present undergoing "recurrent serious crisis".

Christ prayed, "Thy kingdom come" and said "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth". Sri Aurobindo in his "Life Divine" has essayed to show how that "Kingdom" can be consciously brought down both within us and without us, and in doing so explained, with the authenticity of personal realization and scientific precision, *how* that Spirit,—which is Absolute and envisaged in Truth, Consciousness and Bliss—bloweth from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven.

G. M.

**SAMAVEDA-SAMHITA**—Edited with the commentaries of  
Madhava & Bharata-Swamin by Prof. C. Kunhan  
Raja, M. A., D. Phil. ( Oxon )—Curator  
for the Eastern Section of the  
Adyar Library, Madras, 1941.

THIS volume stands as No. 26 in the Adyar Library Series of Publications. We welcome the volume, as we did, some two years before in appreciative terms, the one on the R̥gveda-Samhita, with the valuable ancient commentary of Madhava which had not been published till then. The present number has the further value of containing the commentary on the same

texts by Bharata-Swamin, who also precedes in the attempt the celebrated Sayana—Madhava who is widely held to be the authoritative interpreter of the Texts of the four Vedas. These publications by the learned Editor have a historical value for the critical students of the Vedic lore. They will afford now an opportunity for comparing the commentaries of Sayana with those of the earlier writers—Madhava and Bharata Swamin, particularly the former. The one by Madhava is found to be simpler in style and more direct, while Sayana's, though eminently learned, is rather complicated and discursive at places. The comparison is, therefore, expected to throw light on the development of vedic thought, presumably as the result of philosophic speculations of the intervening period, from the ancient down to the age of Sayana who even comes later than Bharata-Swamin belonging to the 13th century A. D. The exact date of Madhava has not been settled yet, though some would put it in the 6th or the 7th century. This is certain at least that Madhava precedes Bharata-Swamin by some centuries. It is interesting therefore to read how this ancient writer interprets the vedic texts by comparison with the authors of a later period.

It appears, both from the Preface by the Director of the Library and the Foreword by the learned Editor, that no pains have been spared to collate manuscripts from various sources before the publication was taken in hand. This is, we have noticed and announced before on several occasions, a special feature of the Adyar Publications. No volume goes out in print from the Library without years of careful and critical collation of available literature on a particular work. The present volume on the Samaveda gives only the texts with the two commentaries, and that also on what is called the *Purva-archika* portion of the Veda, the commentary of Madhava being available only on this portion. The part called *Uttararchika* is left out here for this reason. But the Editor promises to bring out a second part of the same publication in the Series, which will contain an Introduction and other matters giving valuable information regarding the texts and the commentators. Let us wait in expectation of the publication of this part at an early date. For the present we must, however, thank the Adyar Library—its Director and Curator—for what they have already done on behalf of the earnest readers of the ancient literary lore of this land.

P. B. Adhikari.

(1) *THE SAMANYA-VEDANTA-UPANISADS*—Translated into English by Sri T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar and Edited by Pandit S. Subramanya Sastri. Published by the Adyar Library, Madras, 1941.

(2) *BHAGAVAD-GITARTHA-PRAKASIKA*—of Sri Upanisad-Brahmayogin with the Text—Edited by the Pandits of the Adyar Library and published by the Adyar Library, Madras, 1941.

(1) The first volume, mentioned above, gives an English translation of the original texts of 24 Upanisads published already in 1921 under the name *Samanya Vedanta Upanisads* under the scheme of publication of the 108 notable Upanisads, undertaken by the Library. The original under translation here forms the third volume in the series of Minor Upanisads. The text here is, it has to be noted, different from that consisting of 21 Upanisads bearing the same name of *Samanya-Vedanta*, published later on in 1933 in a volume under the title *Unpublished Upanisads*, which forms the second part of the publication covering 71 texts classified under 5 heads without the commentary of Sri Upanisad-Brahma-Yogin, whose commentaries form a valuable adornment of the published 108 Upanisads. This feature of the publication adds something new, so far as the minor Upanisads in the series are concerned. For although the major 10 Upanisads have been commented upon by several learned authors and their commentaries have been published from different places, no attempt was hitherto made in any quarter to publish the present commentary by Sri-Upanisad-Brahma-Yogin. Even no mention is made in any authoritative work of the name of this learned commentator. The reasons may be partly that he is comparatively a modern writer and secondly that his interpretation of the texts follows mainly the lines adopted by Acharya Samkara. But the present writer appears to be clearer in his expositions than the master he follows. At places he appears even as somewhat original in his explanations. There was no one else in the field to undertake this bold task of offering commentaries on all the 108 Upanisads, including the major and the minor Texts. The reading public interested in the study and understanding of all these texts must owe a thankful appreciation to the Adyar Library for the publication in different volumes of the series of the texts with their commentaries by this erudite author. It is hoped the Library will continue the "parallel" series of English translations, of which the present volume forms the second.

(2) The second volume, under review here, gives the full texts of the *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gita* with the hitherto unpublished commentary thereon by Sri Upanisad-Brahma-Yogin. The volume, as stated by the

Honorary Director of the Adyar Library in his Prefatory Note, completes the series of scriptures ( the 108 Upanisads and the Gita, which is also an Upanisad according to the colophon at the end of each chapter ). Besides this special feature of the volume, contributed by the hitherto unpublished commentary, there is another of importance, namely, an Introduction in English by the well-known Sanskrit scholar, Dr. C. Kunhan Raja, the present Curator for Eastern Section of the Library. In this Introduction the writer begins by stating what he considers to be a justification for publication of the new commentary, when there are in the field commentaries upon commentaries on the texts of the Gita, the number of which from different sources is rather growing in the day. In this Introduction, what is more valuable is the learned discussion undertaken by the author about the text and its different recensions from different sources and the place of the sacred scripture in the Mahabharata. The discussion conducted impartially, will, it is hoped, throw much light on some knotty questions regarding the text and remove certain doubts from the minds of critical readers of the scripture. The Library has thus rendered a valuable service to the readers of the sacred Text by this publication with the new commentary and the learned Introduction.

P. B. Adhikari.

*TO THE WOMEN* :—By Mahatma Gandhi. ( Edited and  
Published by Anand T. Hingorani, Upper Sind Colony,  
Karachi. Pp. 247. Price : Rs. 3/12/- ).

THIS is a comprehensive as well as codified compilation of quotations from the voluminous writings and speeches of Mahatma Gandhi, bearing on the manifold problems of Indian women. It could be easily characterised as an intelligent guide to their heart, cramped as it has been for centuries under so many social and legal constraints and conventions. Now that the spring-breeze of self-awareness has awakened them from their age-old state of passivity, they find themselves on the cross-roads. Gandhiji, seeker of truth as he is, sifts the true from the false and then leaves it to them to make the choice.

Child marriage, widow re-marriage, birth-control, regeneration of women, woman's special mission, women and militarism, the modern girl, the newly-married, the marriage ideal, the doom of *Purdah*, our fallen sisters, *Swaraj* through women, and economic independence of women,—these and other allied questions have been dealt with, with clarity and cogency of reasoning. And if there is any one outstanding impression or

ideal which emerges from Gandhiji's argument it is that woman is, in essence, "mother, maker and silent leader."

"To call woman the weaker sex is a libel ; it is man's injustice to woman."

"I am uncompromising in the matter of woman's rights."

"My ideal of a wife is Sita and of a husband Rama."

"Innocent youth is a priceless possession."

"The real ornament of woman is her character."

"There are all sorts of fashions to-day in society. I say : Handsome is that handsome does."

"Chastity is not a hot-house growth."

A word about the editing and the get-up of the book ; both are excellent.

We now await with interest the third volume in the "Gandhi Series" namely, "To the Hindus and Moslems", planned out by Mr. Hingorani.

G. M.

**HUMANISM** :—By Swami Krishnanand. ( Connaught  
Circus, New Delhi. Pp. 213. Price : Rs. 2/- )

THE aim of this book is "to find out the fundamental truth lying under all religious cults and creeds and to show its practical utility in establishment of the long-desired universal brotherhood and peace, which is the goal of all religious principles." And this fundamental truth the author has characterized as Humanism. He has achieved his objective by presenting in an appreciative manner the central teachings of the principal Faiths of the world. The chapter on "How to bring humanism into practice" is very helpful because the suggestions made therein are simple and practical. *Humanism*, thus, is one more plank in the Bridge of the Brotherhood of Man.

G. M.

**DADABHAI NAOROJI** : By R. P. Masani.  
(George Allen & Unwin. Pp. 567. Price : 16 s.)

MR. Masani deserves the gratitude of his countrymen for presenting them with this splendid biography of the Grand Old Man of India. The author has taken great pains to give us a faithful record of a life as eventful as it was heroic, a life whose silver threads will for ever shine out in the sombre tapestry of India's past during the last one hundred years. The very name of Dadabhai Naoroji, as has been well said, "carried with it the attributes of a great patriot : *Dada* of all India by universal consent, and *Bhai* of



those who suffer and live under suffering, the first of India's sons working for the Naoroz ( New Day ) of India's liberty and emancipation."

Professor, Social Worker, Editor, Business Man, Civic Councillor, Dewan of a native state, Member of Parliament, Congress President—Dadabhai traversed many paths and held many offices. But in whatever capacity he worked, his goal was always the same : how to raise India from abject poverty and humiliation to the full stature of a free and prosperous nation. By education, by temperament and by the atmosphere of the time in which he lived, he was what would today be called a Liberal or a Moderate. He believed in the continuance of the British connection with India and fondly hoped that the British public would live up to their democratic profession, if only the facts of Indian poverty and misrule were properly placed before them.

"It is because I wish that the British rule should be long continued in India, and that it is good that the rulers should know native feeling and opinions, that I come forward and speak my mind freely and boldly" ( p. 125 ).

It was with this hope that he went to settle in England and later entered the House of Commons, to be better able to plead his people's cause. All his life he "lived in a sea of Blue Books", gathering facts and more facts, about the poverty of his countrymen, the wrongs to which they were being daily subjected, in the faith that the British would surely prove to be what they had always professed to be, namely, the trustees of India's welfare. Disillusionment was inevitable and it was not long before he began to complain : "The former rulers were like butchers hacking here and there, but the English, with their scientific scalpel, cut to the very heart, and yet lo ! there is no wound to be seen, and soon the plaster of the high talk of civilization, progress, and what not covers up the wound." ( 207 ).

But disappointment never turned him bitter and he continued to hold to his faith that by constitutional agitation India would succeed in the end in getting justice "at England's hands and conscience." And in that hope and faith, he called upon his countrymen to support England in the war of 1914.

"Don't you think," the learned biographer asked Mahatma Gandhi in 1931, "Dadabhai's policy, which the present generation ridicules as a mendicant policy, was the right one, considering the circumstances then prevailing ?"

" 'Yes,' he replied. Then, promptly anticipating my second question, he added : 'And I believe that if he were alive today he would follow the same policy that I have been pursuing for the last few years.' " ( p. 11 ).

K. K.

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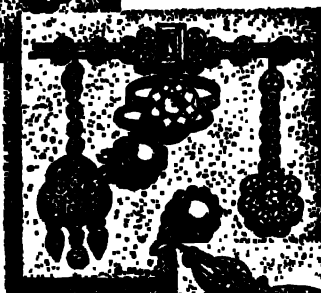
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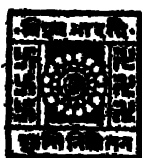
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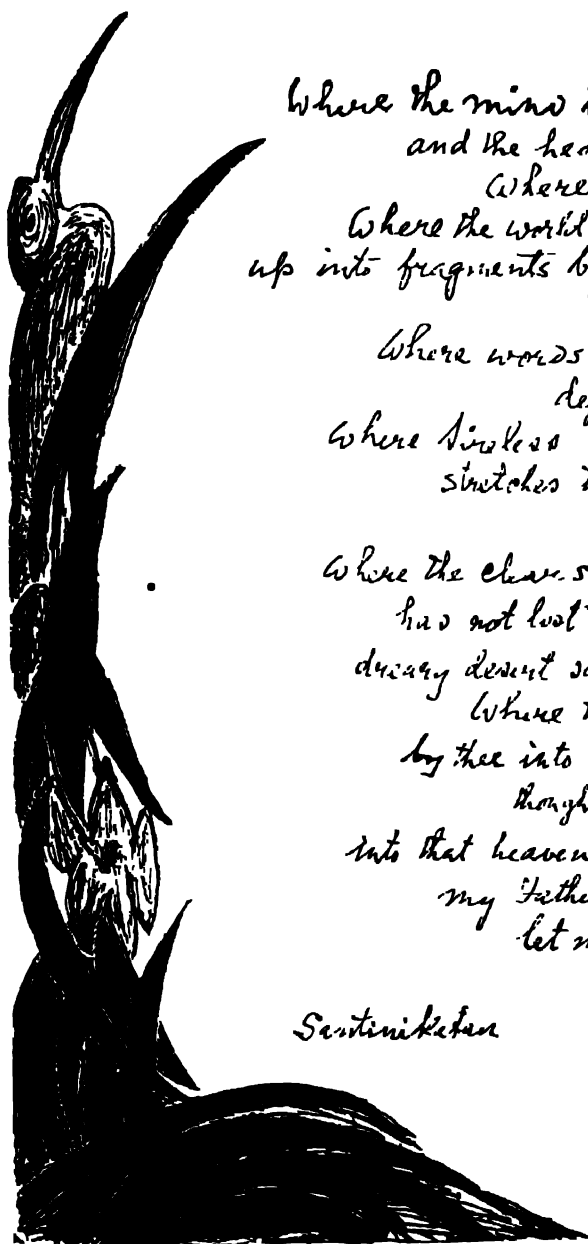
श्रीवैद्यनाथः  
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१०५५



By Mukul Dey







Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high,  
Where knowledge is free ;  
Where the world has not been broken  
up into fragments by narrow domestic  
walls ;  
Where words come out from the  
depth of truth ;  
Where tireless striving  
stretcheth its arms towards  
perfection ;  
Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into the  
dreary desert sand of dead habit ;  
Where the mind is led forward  
by thee into ever-widening  
thought and action —  
into that heaven of freedom,  
my Father,  
let my country awake.

Santiniketan

Kabirpranath Singh



# THE VISVA-BHARATI QUARTERLY

May

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1935

## ART AND TRADITION

By Rabindranath Tagore

There come in our history occasions when the consciousness of a large multitude becomes suddenly illumined with the recognition of something which rises far above the triviality of daily happenings. Such an occasion there was when the voice of Buddha reached distant shores across all physical and moral impediments. Then our life and our world found their profound meaning of reality in their relation to the central person who offered us emancipation of love. And men, in order to make this great human experience ever memorable, determined to do the impossible: they made rocks to speak, stones to sing, caves to remember; the cry of joy and hope took immortal forms along hills and deserts, across barren solitudes and populous cities. A gigantic creative endeavour built up its triumph in stupendous carvings, defying obstacles that were overwhelming. Such heroic activity over the greater part of the Eastern continent clearly answers the question: *What is art?*—Art is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real.

But the individual mind according to its temperament and training has its own recognition of reality in some of its special aspects. We can see from the Gandhara figures of Buddha that the artistic influence of Greece put its emphasis on the scientific aspect, on anatomical accuracy, while the purely Indian mind dwelt on the symbolic aspect and tried to give expression to the soul of Buddha, never acknowledging the limitations of realism.

To the adventurous spirit of the great European sculptor, Rodin, the most significant aspect of reality is the unceasing struggle of the incomplete for its freedom from the fetters of imperfection, whereas before the naturally introspective mind of the Eastern artist the real appears in its ideal form of fulfilment.

Therefore, when we talk of such a fact as Indian Art, it indicates some truth based upon the Indian tradition and temperament. At the same time we must know that there is no such thing as absolute caste restriction in human cultures; they ever have the power to combine and produce new variations, and such combinations have been going on for ages, proving the truth of the deep unity of human psychology. It is admitted that in Indian art the Persian element found no obstacles, and there are signs of various other alien influences. China and Japan have no hesitation in acknowledging their debt to India in their artistic and spiritual growth of life. Fortunately for our civilisations, all such intermingling happened when professional art critics were not rampant and artists were not constantly nudged by the warning elbow of classifiers in their choice of inspiration. Our artists were never tiresomely reminded of the obvious fact that they were Indian; and in consequence they had the freedom to be naturally Indian in spite of all the borrowings that they indulged in.

A sign of greatness in great geniuses is their enormous capacity for borrowing, very often without their knowing it; they have unlimited credit in the world market of cultures. Only mediocrities are ashamed and afraid of borrowing, for they do not know how to pay back the debt in their own coin. Even the most foolish of critics does not dare blame Shakespeare for what he openly appropriated from outside his own national inheritance. The human soul is proud of its comprehensive sensitiveness; it claims its freedom of entry everywhere when it is fully alive and awake. We congratulate ourselves on the fact, and consider it a sign of our being alive in soul, that European thoughts and literary forms found immediate hospitality in Bengali literature from the very beginning of their contact with our mind. It ushered in a great revolution in the realm of our literary expression.

Enormous changes have taken place, but our Indian soul has survived the shock and has vigorously thriven upon this cataclysm.

It is the Indian mentality like the earth's atmo-

sphere, has undoubtedly different temperatures in different geographical zones, yet it is not walled up into impassable compartments and the circulation of the common air over the entire globe continues to have its wholesome effect. So let us take heart and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind, defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics, laughing at them when in their tender solicitude for our safety they ask our artists to behave like good children and never to cross the threshold of their school-room.

Fearfully trying always to conform to a conventional type is a sign of immaturity. Only in babies is individuality of physiognomy blurred, and therefore personal distinction not strongly marked. Childishness as a mentality can easily be generalised: children's babbling has the same sound-tottering everywhere, their toys are very nearly similar. But adult age is difficult of classification, it is composed of individuals who claim recognition of their personal individuality which is shown not only in its own uniqueness of manner but also in its own special response to all stimulations from outside.

I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art, according to some old world mannerism. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like branded beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows. Science is impersonal: it has its one aspect which is merely universal and therefore abstract; but art is personal and, therefore, through it the universal manifests itself in the guise of the individual, physiology expresses itself in physiognomy, philology in literature. Science is a passenger in a railway train of generalisation; there reasoning minds from all directions come to make their journey together in a similar conveyance. Art is a solitary pedestrian, who walks alone among the multitude, continually assimilating various experiences, unclassifiable and uncatalogued.

There was a time when human races lived in comparative segregation and therefore the art adventurers had their experience within a narrow range of limits, along the deeply-cut grooves of certain common characteristics. But today that range has vastly widened, claiming from us a much greater power of receptivity than what we were compelled to cultivate in former ages. If today we have a living soul that is sensitive to ideas and to beauty of

form, let it prove its capacity by accepting all that is worthy of acceptance, not according to some blind injunction of custom or fashion, but in following one's instinct for eternal value—the instinct which is a God-given gift to all real artists. Even then our art is sure to have a quality which is Indian, but it must be an inner quality and not an artificially fostered formalism; and therefore not too obtrusively obvious, nor abnormally self-conscious.

When in the name of Indian art we cultivate with deliberate aggressiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our soul under idiosyncracies unearthed from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever changing play of life.

Art is not a gorgeous sepulchre, immovably brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustment with surprises, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future, which is as different from the past as the tree from the seed. Art represents the inexhaustible magnificence of our creative spirit; it is generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal; it is unique in its manner and universal in its appeal; it is hospitable to the All because it has the wealth which is its own; its vision is new though its view may be old; it carries its special criterion of excellence within itself and therefore contemptuously refuses to be brow-beaten into conformity with a rhetoric manufactured by those who are not in the secret of the subtle mysteries of creation, who want to simplify through their academic code of law that which is absolutely simple through its spontaneity.

The art ideal of a people may take fixed root in a narrow soil of tradition, developing a vegetable character, producing a monotonous type of leaves and flowers in a continuous round of repetitions. Because it is not disturbed by a mind which ever seeks the unattained, and because it is held firm by a habit which piously discourages allurements of all adventure, it is neither helped by the growing life of the people nor does it help to enrich that life. It remains confined to coteries of specialists who nourish it with delicate attention and feel proud of the ancient flavour of its aristocratic exclusiveness. It is not a stream that flows through and fertilises the soil, but a rare wine stored in a dark cellar underground, acquiring a special stimulation through its artificially nurtured, barren antiquity. In exchange for a freedom of movement which is the prerogative of vigorous youth, we may

gain a static perfection of senility that has minted its wisdom into hard and rounded maxims. Unfortunately, there are those who believe it an advantage for a child to be able to borrow its grandparents' age and be spared the trouble and risk of growing and think that it is a sign of wealthy respectability for an artist lazily to cultivate a monotonously easy success by means of some hoarded patrimony of tradition.

The genesis of all art traditions must have been in some gestures in the modes and mediums of expression that spontaneously came to men of genius and were followed by others whose admiration naturally pursued the path of imitation. In poetic literature it is our common experience to find that striking phrases and suggestive mannerisms, originating from the writings of some popularly accepted poet, spread fast in a soil of susceptible mentality. However, if the literature has any vitality it is cured of that infection before it develops a poison that is fatal. The malady takes a chronic persistence when it finds its breeding place in an inert period of mental degeneracy. When something in art, which is too peculiar in its presentment, shows an incorrigible tendency to repeat itself we may be sure that it is a sign of the waning life. If it is a fact that some standard of invariable formalism has for ages been following the course of the arts in India, making it possible for them to be classified as specially Indian, then it must be confessed that the creative mind which inevitably breaks out in individual variations has lain dead or dormant for those torpid centuries. All traditional structures of art must have sufficient degree of elasticity to allow it to respond to varied impulses of life, delicate or virile; to grow with its growth, to dance with its rhythm. There are traditions which, in alliance with rigid prescriptions of rhetoric, establish their slave dynasty, dethroning their master, the Life-urge, that revels in endless freedom of expression. This is a tragedy whose outrage we realise in the latter-day Sanskrit literature and in the conventional arts and crafts of India, where mind is helplessly driven by a blind ghost of the past.

And yet we may go too far if we altogether reject tradition in the cultivation of the arts, and it is an incomplete statement of truth to say that habits have the sole effect of deadening our mind. The tradition which is helpful is like a channel that helps the current to flow. It is open where the water runs onward, guarding it only where there is danger in deviation. The bee's life in its



channel of habit has no opening: it revolves within a narrow circle of perfection. Man's life has time-honoured institutions which are its organised habits. When these act as enclosures, then the result may be perfect, like a bee-hive of wonderful precision of form, but unsuitable for the mind which has unlimited possibilities of progress.



# ART AND EDUCATION

By James H. Cousins

Notwithstanding the high value that Indian thought from time immemorial has set on objects of art as helps towards spiritual culture, art never got an integral place in either the Hindu, Buddhist or Mussulman curricula. The artist was trained, but not educated. The finished product was more esteemed than its human producer. Even now, at any rate in South India, we acknowledge the ecstasy that the musician creates in us by giving him a garland in the auditorium—and his food on the pial if his name-termination on earth does not permit his having it with those whom he has lifted to heaven.

Plato did recognise creative art in education, though he was rough on certain of the poets. But between him and the twentieth century, educational thought in the Occident took no thought for art. Herbert Spencer, with all the cheek that mere brain can show, turned it away from the emotional nature of the student.

Even as near our time as 1917, an American educationist, Dr. H. H. Horne in *The Philosophy of Education*, had to confess that aesthetical education "is the most neglected feature of our curriculum, and yet it stands as an essential constituent of the child's present and future environment, and is the product of one of the deepest phases of the human consciousness."

It is not far from certain that the neglect of an essential human constituent in the preparing of the young for life will lead to a menacing lop-sidedness in the individuals and in the social organism which they collectively make up; that is to say, it is fairly certain that the neglect of art in education has led to the appallingly inartistic life of humanity and to that most inartistic and inhuman of human activities, warfare.

The problems of human life cannot, we may confidently assert, be solved, and humanity set free from its subhuman obsessions, until a radical change has been effected in the general attitude and way of living. And this can only be done completely by an education that is itself complete in bringing the impulses and desires of humanity under educative self-discipline equally with the mental and actional capacities of the individual.

There is a vague recognition of the need of emotional education in the phrase that is so often used when all else has failed—"What is needed is a change of heart," the utterer usually waiting for the others to do the changing. But the mere sentimentality that the phrase expresses is a feeble thing beside the urges of feeling-necessity. What is needed is ( to use a suggestive figure of speech that is becoming healthily frequent in educational literature) the "canalising" of the floods of emotion, that is, the putting of them under control in definite directions, to the vitalising of thought and action, instead of letting them work havoc on their way to futility or to disappearance in "the dreary desert sand of dead habit." The digging of canals in young clay is a much easier matter than blasting them through old rocks. The canalising of the creative impulse in childhood and youth by art is the only educational wisdom.

In a recent article on *Peace and Education*, Dr. Maria Montessori puts this idea in her clear calm way. Touching on the central element in the present world-crisis, war, she asserts that "the cause of war does not lie in armaments, but in the men who make use of them." The fundamental need of the crisis, therefore, in her view—a view which I heartily share, though I do not think that armaments are as innocent as she believes—is an education that will allow humanity to grow up with "a healthy soul, enjoying the full development of a strong character and a clear intellect." This means a complete education; an education based on the assurance, now strengthened by observation, that its completeness will lead humanity away from the manifest anarchy produced by a selfish and predatory education to an instinctive order subjectively imposed on human life by the authority of its own higher nature.

Dr. Montessori's reference to "a healthy soul . . . strong character . . . clear intellect" is not a casual phrase: it is the essence of her experience as an educator. It is her response to the inescapable triangle of external human capacities—the emotional capacity through which the soul-ful qualities of aspiration and creative expression unfold and realise themselves; the dynamic capacity through which the attainments and qualities of the other capacities are fused into the synthetical revelation of character; and the cognitive capacity which observes and contemplates the phenomena of experience gained through feeling and

The most essential of these is the soul. For while the processes of thought and action are related to subjective and objective time and space, and undergo modification that is sometimes felt by the inner nature of the best human spirits to be slower than a crisis demands ( as at present in world-affairs ), the processes of the deeper psychological capacity called by Dr. Montessori the soul have the immediateness of intuition. Thus, in relation to the problem of war, the cognitive capacities of the heads of various nations are working out pacts and alliances; but their faith in these as preventives of warfare is not absolute, for their dynamic capacity is busy in preparations for feared conflict. But, says Dr. Montessori, "War would not be a problem at all for the soul of the new man; he would *see* it simply as a barbarous state, contrasting with civilisation, an absurd and incomprehensible phenomenon."

She declares that "to conquer war, a sincere and inspired voice would be enough, crying, like Jonah: Be ye converted and repent, or Nineveh shall be destroyed." But the succession of inspired voices that have called on humanity to be sorry for their misdeeds and to turn against them, and have had no better reply than the state of alleged civilisation today, does not appear to confirm Dr. Montessori's optimistic confidence. We are, I feel, nearer actual possibility in her declaration of her discovery that the child, educated in the true way, is "a passionate lover of order and work."

If we put the declaration the other way round, that the child who is liberated through a complete education is a passionate lover of *work* and *order*, we have a statement of a law of human life that is therefore a law of education—the law that life perpetually seeks expression through human activity, and simultaneously safeguards itself against dissipation in futility, by imposing on action, and by imparting to the objective results of action, the orderliness of intention, design, and unity.

This love of work and order is not only true of children who have had the opportunity of free expression: it has been found to be equally true of youths whose activities have been diverted into delinquency and social disorderliness. Given the opportunity to express the energy of life through the order-inducing media of art-crafts, they have recovered the fundamental human necessity of work and order which Dr. Montessori and other wise experimenters in education have observed, and have been transformed into happy and useful citizens.

This being so, it looks as if the swing of the educational pendulum from cramming towards the satisfaction of the real needs of embodied life had only got half-way when it determined to be strictly etymological and set about in good earnest e-ducing the capacities of the individual. It is possible that *conscious* e-ducing (trying to pull out powers whose qualities and ratios of interaction are far from clear to even the most sensitive educator) may be a subtle frustration of the real business that wears the disguise of the word education. What life apparently asks is not for good-hearted people to stand in its way, offering it enticements to being *led forth*, but to have its way cleared of obstructions to its own choice among the paraphernalia of *work* and *order*.

This would seem to mean a handing over of education to childish anarchy. There is, no doubt, as much risk of disturbance to the settled habits and notions of the elder generation (that stands in front of the younger and talks rhetorically of youth being the future) in a sudden change from bad to good as from good to bad.

There is, of course, no risk of such suddenness in educational organisation and method evident anywhere—though the anarchy is with us even now, as seen in an honest look at the state of the world, and an equally honest look at the physique, character, habits, feelings and intellectual stamina of the youth of India who are undergoing the process of education to-day. Dr. L. P. Jacks, whose experience and thought place his utterances as nearly beyond dispute as any utterance can be, lays the responsibility for the disorder in human life today at the door of education in his book, *The Education of the Whole Man*. He says: "... the practice of perfection is not initiated by learning the three R's nor by anything which proceeds from these useful acquisitions. It begins much deeper down, in acquisitions which should be called 'elemental' rather than 'elementary.' For want of a good sound 'elemental' education which aims at developing the fundamental virtue of self-control . . . democracy is moving towards a disaster which elementary education of the book-say and hear-say type will rather hasten than avert."

That "sound elemental education" is, as Dr. Jacks claims, the education of the whole individual as a creator. "The whole man is," he asserts, "a creator. Educate him in his wholeness as such, and the inner vacancy of his being, which hungers for creation, and can never be satisfied with anything else, will be filled."

Now this naming of man as creator (and of course man is here taken as the *homo*, the human being irrespective of sex) is just putting into another form of expression Dr. Montessori's declaration that the liberated child is a lover of work and order. For creation is orderly work—something done, and done under the laws of its own being. These laws are, in some way as yet beyond our analysis, based in nature, and affiliated with universal law. Liberation through creation is therefore the sure way to individual happiness through the release of inevitable creative tension into inevitable conditions governing creative forms, conditions that, because they are the inevitable means to happy achievement, are accepted, and in their acceptance induce in the creator of them "the fundamental virtue of self-control."

"This means that art" (to state in Dr. Jacks' words what I have often stated in my own) "(art always understood in its catholic sense as the most excellent doing of what needs to be done) must find a larger and more central place in educational practice. It means that increased weight must be thrown into awaking and training the sense of beauty, the greatest of our lost inheritances, but the best of all prophylactics against vice, the most vitalising and uplifting of all the positive motives that interest and actuate the whole man . . ."

Dr. Jacks' declaration expresses the two main influences of art-expression on human nature—as preventive of vice in all its forms, and as a curative agent (therapeutic) where vice is already active.

The therapeutic influence of art-expression is useful in the present diseased state of humanity. But the mere application of remedial measures to enable a diseased individual to recover the capacity to repeat the actions that produced the disease, will not lead humanity to any kind of health. The ultimate need is a true prophylactic—not the ingestion or injection of foreign entities into the emotional stream to create a state of armed neutrality, oscillating between periods of warfare between themselves and other foreign entities; but the clear-ridding of the imagination, the emotions, and their mental and physical collaborators, of every disease-producing element through leaving them open to the detergent flood of inspiration and illumination from the lofty springs of man's higher nature.

This process—and it puts a complete education into a sentence

some degree of beauty. But beauty is not its objective. The pursuit of beauty can itself become a pander to sensuality. It is thus exploited the world over today in the service of rapacious and ruthless commercialism. Art in education is not as a merely aesthetical matter. It is, in the profoundest sense of the term, a spiritual necessity, and, in the profoundest sense of the term, a spiritualising power.



# **The Conception and Development of Sunya-vada<sup>1</sup>**

## **in Medieval India**

*By* Kshiti Mohan Sen

Men have exhausted all intellectual resources to express the Supreme Truth. They have tried to express the Ultimate Reality through affirmation, through negation, through all other possible means; but have failed to give adequate expression to it.

If we try to define the Supreme Truth through affirmation, it gets limited by the material facts of this universe; and if we try to express it by negation, no positive clue can be given. Therefore some sages have attempted to express it through absolute negation. This paper is a historical study of this great endeavour.

### **Sunya ( शून्य ) Doctrine in the Rig Veda**

A striking example of such an endeavour we find in the Rig Veda. The seer describes the state before creation and existence with these wonderful words:

"Then there was neither existence ( सत् ) nor non-existence ( असत् ) (RV. X, 129, 1).

"Then there was neither death nor immortality" (ibid., 2).

"Then there was nothing besides Him" (ibid., 1).

"Who can know, who can declare, whence has come what is the source of this wonderful creation?" (ibid., 6).

### **In the Upanishads**

Then comes the gathered wisdom of the Upanishads. Isha Upanishad says: "He pervaded because He is incorporeal ( अकार ) (Isha Up. 8).

"He provides for all because He is colourless ( अवर्ण )" (Svet. Up. IV, 1).

"This great *Atmān* is without birth, without decay, without death" (Br. Up. IV, 4, 25).

"The source of all being ( सृष्टयोनि ) is all-pervading

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<sup>1</sup> ( शून्यवाद ) Doctrine of Voidness.



( सर्वगत ); is at the same time devoid of all qualifications" (Mu. Up. I, 1, 6).

"That Unalterable, they say, is the negation of all attributes" (Br. Up. III, 8, 9).

"But the entire world is held together by the law of that Unalterable" (Br. Up. III, 8, 8).

"Our senses, our knowledge, fail to reach that Primal Source of all" (Kena Up. I, 3).

"That Primal Cause is devoid of all attributes, has no beginning, no end; is supremely great and permanent.

"By knowing Him one becomes free from death" (Katha Up. I, 3, 15).

"He, the Self, is to be described as *not so, not so*, ( नेति नेति ) (Br. Up. IV, 4, 22).

Here we see how the sages are driven to the way of negation in their anxiety to express the quality of the Absolute; and how very inadequate even that way is.

### In Buddhism (Mahayana महायान )

This intellectual formula ( नेति नेति ) gradually evolved into a positive assertion of a definite state of spiritual consciousness, *Nirvana* ( निर्वाण ). The fundamental truth of the Buddhists was non-permanence, soullessness, and peace in *Nirvana*.

The doctrine of *Sunyata* (voidness) in Buddhism has been so elaborately studied and surveyed by eminent scholars, that it would be superfluous to discuss its development in this paper. The *Mahayana* literature, itself, has done fair justice to it: in poetic vein by Ashvaghosa, in philosophic dignity by Nagarjuna ( नागार्जुन ). This much is clear that, as defined by Nagarjuna, *Sunya* is not mere negation.

"This *Sunya* is neither existent nor non-existent, neither both of them nor non-both of them."

Rather the existence of everything has been made possible because of this *Sunyata* ( शून्यता ).

"He that is allied to *Sunya* is allied to all that is; he that is removed from *Sunya* is removed from all that is" (Nagarjuna, *Madhyamika Sutra* ( मध्यमिक सूत्र ), 24, 14).

This doctrine was wonderfully expounded by some medieval thinkers: Everything is transient and subject to change, therefore *Sunya*. This *Sunya* alone is truth. this is the highest reality.

Aryadeva has also very successfully surveyed this doctrine. Neither the Yogacharis, nor the Vajrayanis, could proceed with their philosophies without drawing upon it. Philosophers, like Maitreyanatha and Asanga, were Yogacharis. In fact, the *Paramarthalaksana* of Asanga is the *Sunya* doctrine of Nagarjuna:

"Not existent ( सत् ) nor non-existent ( असत् ); not thiswise ( तथा ), nor otherwise ( अन्यथा )" ( *Mahayana Sutralankara* ( महायान सूत्रालङ्कार ), (Levi), VI, I. p. 22).

### In the Tantras

According to the Gayatri Tantra, *Sunya*-worship alone, without any *nyasa*<sup>1</sup> or *pranayama* (प्राणायाम breath-control), sanctifies everything (pariccheda I).

The Kamadhenu Tantra affirms: "*Sunya*-knowledge is beyond all *Sunya*, it is absolute *Sunya*, it is pure, without any stain or falsehood; its brightness is like unto that of ten million suns" (patala XI).

"One should do the *japa* ( जप ritual of meditation) of *Sunya*, which is illuminated in the firmament of the heart" (patala XXI).

While the Jnanasankalini Tantra ( ज्ञानसंकलिनी ) says: "Paramatma is *Sunya* where mind gets merged" (33).

"*Sunya* element is life" (ibid., 34).

Again: "Meditation is the process of merging the mind in *Sunya*, no other meditation is worth the name" (ibid., 54).

*Sunya* is thus made the repository of all consciousness. So too, the Supreme God, *Mahadeva*, affirms: "I am *Rudra*, ( रुद्र ) I am *Sunya*, I am all-pervading, and unqualified" (ibid., 85).

### *Sunya* in the Dharma Cult of Bengal

*Sunya-Purana* (11th century A.D.?):—The worship of *Sunya* came to be fully established in Bengal with the *Dharma* Cult. According to the *Sunya-Purana*, the Supreme God is *Sunya-rupa* (ed. by Charu Chandra Banerji, p. 152).

This *Sunya* has been worshipped by Haricandra (ibid., 111, 1). The *Sunya Purana* says: "*Sunya* is a lake which is filled up with the water of *bhakti*" (ibid., 177, v. 10).

1 ( न्यास ) Assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities, which is usually accompanied with prayer and corresponding gesticulations.

In the *Dharma Puja Vidhana* of Ramai Pandit of Bengal (11th century A. D.?), we see very clearly how this *Sunya*, being *Niranjana* (stainless), came to be identified with *Dharma*. Through *Niranjan* Cult, *Sunya* underwent a very interesting transformation: it came to be identified with *sahaja*, in which form it is to be found in the age of Ramananda. (We find *Sunya*, in its pure form as well as identified with *sahaja*, in Kabir and many post-Kabir medieval saints, none of whom was an idolator. However, we shall discuss them later on.)

In the *Dharma Puja Vidhana* occurs the following question and its answer, as part of *Dvar Bheta* ( द्वार भेट ) ceremony: "O pandita, where is your abode, whom do you worship, what form do you meditate upon?" (ibid.—Bengal Sahitya Parishat—p. 165).

"My abode is in Balluka,<sup>2</sup> I adore God without form, I meditate on *Sunya* form, and I worship image with form" (ibid., p. 165).

In the same work (p. 70) we find this beautiful *dhyana* (ध्यान):

"He that has no beginning, nor end; no figure nor form; no birth nor death; who is all pervading and unlimited by purpose; who is stainless and immortal; who is to be realised only: through *yoga*—may that *Sunya-murti* be my saviour!"

"In the beginning there was nothing: darkness was everywhere and *Sunya* was all-pervading. Then there was only *Brahma* and no second" (ibid., pp. 199—203).

Again: "In the beginning was only *Sunya*; creation came out of the activity of *Brahma* with *Sunya* meditation" (ibid., pp. 200—201).

*Dharma*, who is *Sunya-rupa*, has "no form, no body, no *ninad* (I think, *nidan*, i.e. cause), no birth, no image. Salutation to that *Sunya*!" (ibid., p. 90, v. 146).

"*Dharma* is without beginning, without end. He is *Sunya-rupa*, Divine *Niranjana*. Salutation to *Dharma*!" (ibid., p. 91, v. 152).

This *Sunya Dharma* is not a negative entity, for "He is everywhere, and He is the Primal Cause" (ibid., p. 92, v. 157). And though He is *Sunyakara* (सुन्याकार) yet He is the "Fulfiller of all desires" (ibid, 75, v. 26). Therefore *Sunya-niranjana* was regularly invoked.

1 (सहज) literally, "inborn", "natural".

2 Name of a river in the south-west of Bengal.

In the *Dharma-mangala* of Ghanarama (ed. by Gurudas Chatterji, 1902) again we see that *Dharma* is *Sunya*, *Dharma* is *Niranjana* (ibid., pp. 2, 169). He is *Hari* and He is *Vishnu* (ibid., pp. 112, 125, 138, 151, 157, 244). He comes to save His devotee in the form of *Narayana*. His abode is *Golaka*; He is *Pandava-sarathi* (पाण्डव-सारथी) (ibid., pp. 233, 234).

So, too, in the *Dharma-mangala* of Mayurabhatta (which is one of the earliest books of that kind), *Dharmasila* (धर्मशीला) has been called *Vishnusila* (विष्णुशीला). Manik Ganguli, too, in his *Dharma-mangala* (1467 A. D.), calls *Kailasa*, the abode of *Sunya*.

### In Natha Sect

The medieval mystics accepted *Sunya* in their own way : with the idolators it became sanctified in various kinds of idols or sacred stones; with the non-idolators it remained as a way of expressing the idea of the infinite. It also got mixed up with their own doctrines of *sahaja* (सहज), *samarasa* (समरस), *ekarasa* (एकरस), etc., etc.

We have no space here to deal in detail with *Natha-pantha*. Those who are familiar with this school, know that *Goraksanatha* (12th century A. D.?) was deeply touched with *Sunya* doctrine. In the *Goraksa-samhita* we find: "a devotee, sanctified by *samarasa* remains in ecstasy in *sunya*" (ed. by Prasanna Kumar Kaviratna, 1st edition, p. 183, panchama amsa, 105).

In the *Goraksna Vijaya* by Sheikh Faizulla (15th century A. D., according to Dr. D. C. Sen), there is mention of *Sunya-mantra*. *Sunya-jnana* has also been mentioned (p. 162).

In the Bengali songs of Gopichand, as published by the University of Calcutta, we find *Dharma-raj* called, *Sunya-raja* (pp. 475, 485, 497).

Wherever we see prevalence of *Dharma* Cult, there also we come across the predominance of this doctrine. In Orissa the *Dharma Gita* of Mahadeva Das is regarded as a sacred book. There we read that *Sunya-Purusa* was occupying infinite *maha-sunya*. He was *Nirguna maha-sunya-murti* (निर्गुण महा-सून्य-मूर्ति). Becoming *saguna*, he was transformed into *Brahma*. From him came out *Adya-Sakti* (आद्याशक्ति), the mother of *Brahma*, *Visnu* and *Siva*.

In the *Brahmanda Bhugola Gita* of Balaram Das of Orissa, we read that God was *Sunya-rupa* in the beginning. In the *Saraswat Gita* of the same author, the Creator has been called *Maha-sunya*.

**Jayadeva (1170 A. D.?) and Ramananda  
( 14th Century A. D. ? )**

In Northern India, during the time of Ramananda, the *Sunya* doctrine got mixed up with the *Sahaja* cult. According to the *Grantha Sahib* of the Sikhs, both Jayadeva and Ramananda were worshippers of *sahaja*. Says Jayadev: "I have become absorbed in His love, I have obliterated myself in Him, and have acquired *Brahma-Nirvana*" (*Grantha Sahib*, Rag Maru). The *Grantha Sahib* has preserved for us the famous *vani* (वाणी) of Ramananda: "Where shall I go? The sport (लीला) is going on within me. My mind likes not to move: it has grown immobile... I was going to worship in the temple of *Brahma*: *Guru* says the *Brahma* is within" (*Grantha Sahib*, Rag Basanta).

Ramananda is here against all ceremonialism. He is a *sahaja* devotee. In the *Sahajananda Grantha* of Bhakta Sundaradas (born 1596 A. D. ), we read these interesting verses: "That *Sahaja Niranjana* we find everywhere. In that *sahaja* are all saints held together... Saint Soja and Saint Pipa are immersed in *Sahaja*; Saints Sena and Dhanna are drinking the delight (*ras*) of *Sahaja*. Of *Sahaja* was Ravidasa a devotee; in *Sahaja* alone was the delight of *Guru Dadu*." In the *vanis* of all these medieval saints and mystics, we find *Sahaja* and *Sunya* blending into each other.

**Kabir (1398 A. D. ? )**

In the *vanis* of Kabir, in particular, we find this blending reaching its full synthesis. Kabir's genius was prolific, and a good deal of his writings are only imperfectly known. To collect all his utterances on *Sunya* and *Sahaja* would need a volume in itself. I shall, therefore, confine my references to one handy volume only, which was published by the Nagri Pracharini Sabha in 1928.

That Kabir's synthetic genius could not get satisfied with the merely negative significance of *Sunya*, is well brought out by his answer to the question he asks in the padavali No. 164: "Where you reside, O *Niranjana*, is there anything positive, or is there only *Sunya*?"

In reply he warns himself: "A devotee loses his own self if he forgets God and places his love in *Sunya*" (ibid., astapadi ramaini p. 239).

Again: "What is caste? He has created by mixing water and air. With *Sabda* (logos) has *Sunya* been filled up" (ibid.).

Within our body "is the firmament resounding with *anahada* (infinite) music; there the mind is merged in *Sunya*" (ibid., pad 7). "Within our heart are the *Ganga* and the *Yamuna*: *Sahaja-Sunya* is the *ghata* (घाट) where they meet" (ibid., lai anga, 3).<sup>1</sup>

"*Sahaja-Sunya* is the ever-growing tree which can absorb the whole universe of land and water" (ibid., parisista-pada, 108).

"*Sunya* is the infinite which is beyond all limitations" (ibid., Parcha Anga, 11).

This *Sunya* is not void or empty; for here is the dwelling place of the "man of heart" (ibid., Gurusikha Hera Anga, 7). "Sri Kamalakantā resides here on the twelve-petaled lotus" (ibid., parisista pada, 17).

"Music is going on in the *Sunya* sphere, and to that music is my mind dancing" (ibid., pad, 72).

"That *rasa* (रस) is available to him who has been initiated by a *sat-guru*" (ibid., pad, 74).

"In that *sunya* sphere have I taken my dwelling-place, that I may ever remain immersed in that *rasa*" (ibid., pad, 154).

"Such a reality is *sunya* that no room is there for imaginings" (ibid., parisista pada, 211).<sup>2</sup>

"The illusion of life and death ceases if one while living can remain immersed in *sunya*" (ibid., 73).<sup>3</sup>

But "Says Kabir, the limitations and illusions break, and while living our mind enters into *sunya*" (ibid., 63).

"When the personal *sunya* embraces the universal *sunya*, I will become *samadarsi* (one whose synthetic vision takes in all alike) and will be like wind" (ibid., 24).

"To break the unending chain of life and death, one should enter into *sunya*" (ibid., 91).

<sup>1</sup> गंगा यमुना हर अंतरे सहज सुनि क्यों घाट ॥

<sup>2</sup> कल गुफा महि आसन बैसन कल्प विवर्जित पंथा ॥

<sup>3</sup> जन्म मरण का क्रम गया.....

जीवत सुनि समाधिवा..... ॥

### Dadu (1544-1603 A. D.)

Though born several generations later, Dadu was the disciple of Kabir. He, too, has thrown considerable light on *Sunya*. To him, as to Kabir, *Sunya* as a negation was unacceptable. He cries: "What mean you by giving name to nothingness, which has no reality at all?" (Dadu, *Sacha Anga*, 795 ).<sup>1</sup>

"The whole world is deluding itself by accepting non-existence as a reality" (ibid., 796).

He accepted that subtle *sahaja* infinity which has no form nor any limitation, and which the ordinary man repudiates (*Bhesa Anga*, 26).

He says: "He who reduces his passions to ashes, lives in *sahaja* and meditates on *Sunya*, attains universal receptiveness and becomes unconquerable for ever" (Raga Bitawal, 349).

"In every form, in every soul, everywhere is that *sahaja* immanent. There is the field of the sport of *Niranjana*. No *guna* (qualification) can have access there" (*Parcha Anga*, 56).

In the *Parcha Anga* of Dadu there are fourteen *vanis* (56-68), dealing with *sahaja-sunya* as a lake or an ocean, which is the repository of the supreme *rasa*. Here, however, we shall quote from only two of them.

"By the brink of that *sahaja* lake, I brought my heart at His Lotus-feet. There I found my beloved, the primal *Niranjana*" (No. 60).

"Filled with fulfilment is that ocean of bliss. Its waters are bright and pure. Dadu says, none but the thirsty may drink therefrom" (63).<sup>2</sup>

"*Sunya* is the ocean of *sahaja*: mind is the pearl-diver" (67).

"God is the Lotus in that *Sunya* lake: mind is the bee" (66).

Considering the difficulty of attaining to that reservoir of bliss by any external means, Dadu asks: "This is a way where no foot may tread: how can any being reach there?" (Dadu, *Lai Anga*, 10).

<sup>1</sup> कुछ बाह्य का नाव क्या जे बरिये सो कूट ॥

<sup>2</sup> कब सागर समर मयां कबक निर्मल नीर ॥

Later on, he answers: "*Para-Brahma* has given the way: *sahaja* meditation on love is the thing essential" (ibid., 74).

"Let the mind dwell in *sahaja-sunya*, which lies between *yoga-samadhi* and *premananda*" (ibid., 9).

The *Dharma Puja Vidhana* (p. 93) of Bengal describes three kinds of *sunya*: (i) *Maha-sunya*, (ii) *Parama-sunya*, (iii) *Anila-sunya*. Dadu also has mentioned three kinds: (i) *Kaya-sunya*, (ii) *Atam-sunya*, (iii) *Parama-sunya*. In *kaya-sunya* the five elements (senses) reside; in *atam-sunya* life gets its expression; in *parama-sunya*, there is union with *Brahma* (*Parcha Anga*, 53).

We also find mention of *Brahma-sunya*, where resides the infinite, unlimited *Brahma*, devoid of form. In *vani* No. 50, of the *Parcha Anga*, we learn that the first three *sunyas* are concerned with the world of form, whilst the fourth *sunya* is *nirguna*. In that *sahaja-sunya* is going on the sport of love. In *vanis*, 54 and 55, Dadu sings:

"*Sahaja-sunya* is the source of all: the sun, the moon and the firmament. In it find their expression, earth, water, wind and fire. Time, passion, soul, mind and its illusion, and form and breath—all have their source in it; that also is the abode of God. That *sahaja-sunya* is with everyone" (*Parcha Anga*, 54—55).

Sundaradasa, who was a disciple of Dadu, also says: "There is no *dhyana* (meditation) like that of *sunya*: it is the best of all *dhyanas*" (*Jnanasamudra*, *Rupatita Dhyana*, 83). "By the grace of God, let your *samadhi* rest in *sunya*" (ibid., *Gurusisya Laksana Nirupana*, 12).

Among the disciples of Dadu was one, *Rajjab* (16th century A. D.), a deeply spiritual man. His principal dictum was:

"Out of 'Nay', nothing alone can come: reality can only come of 'Yea'."

What then is the use of *sunya*? he asks. *Sunya* is the space where life finds its expression and its possibility of growth. Life has been possible only because it is surrounded with the freedom of *akasa* (ether). No life could have existed, had this *akasa* been something less ethereal. And the guru (teacher) who has to open and unfold the inner life of his disciple, must also be like this *sunya* (*Rajjab, Gurudeva Anga*, 56).

"*Sunya* is sunk in the five elements (and senses), and is at the same time free of them" (*Sakhibhuta Anga*, 8).

"Both *sunya* and the Lord are without beginning, without end and without the middle" (*Rajjab Anga*, 57).



"The devotee and the cloud are alike: they both take their *sunya*-nectar" ( *Sadha Anga*, 1 ).

"*Sunya* is filled up with consciousness and there *sahaja* abides" ( *Gurudeva Anga*, 85 ).

"Like the cloud gaining colour against the background of infinity, the ego gains its colour whilst resting against *sunya* and the Lord" ( *Sakhibhuta Anga*, 10 ).

"Lighting, wind, and cloud, they are inconstant. *Sunya* is ever steady" ( *Prasidhha Sadhaka Anga*, 11 ).

"The highest bliss of the personal consciousness is to be merged in the Infinite Consciousness: the personal *sunya* has its fulfilment in the infinite *Sunya*" ( *Sajivani Anga*, 4 ).

### Guru Nanak (Born 1469 A.D.)

In the *vanis* of Guru Nanak, too, we find numerous references to *sunya* and *sahaja*, though here we shall quote only a few.

When Pandit Brahmadas asked the Guru what there was before Creation, the Guru replied: "Then there was neither day nor night; nor sun nor moon. His *samadhi* was in *sunya*" ( *Grantha Sahib*, Raga Maru ).

"He is *Sunya-kala*" ( *ibid.* ).

"The Yogis meditate on *sunya*" ( *ibid.*, Asa Astapadi ).

The *Prana-Sangali* (प्राण-संगली), according to the Sikhs, contains Guru Nanak's authoritative statements on yoga. It is supposed to be the record of his conversations with the yogis he met in Ceylon, when he went there to give spiritual instruction to Raja Sivanabha, written by his disciples Gheto and Saido, from memory; although many scholars maintain that the book was written a long time after Nanak. Anyhow, the book tells us a great deal about the yoga doctrines of the Sikhs.

It tells, in the first chapter, how "the Lord unfolded the universe in many colours out of *sunya*" ( p. 1 ).

The second chapter is about meditation on the Supreme Thatness. We read how Nanak had his entry in the *sunya* palace and how he got the priceless jewels therefrom ( p. 8 ).

The third chapter talks of Life and Form emerging out of *sunya* ( p. 17 ). It says: "Everyone is saying, *sunya*, *sunya*. The Lord, Himself, is engaged in *sunya* meditation. When He, in *sunya* meditation, alone is, then who is the *guru* and who the *chela* (disciple)?" ( p. 18 ).

"When the Lord was alone in that darkness, then He, Himself, was the guru, He, Himself, the chela" ( *ibid.* ).

"In *sunya* alone is the unfailing *sahaja*" ( *ibid.*, p. 6, 36 ).

"He alone is a *sannyasi* who comprehends *sunya*" ( p. 9, 58 ).

"Let the muezzin make us hear that *anahada* music of the call for prayer! Let him bow his head in the *sunya* mosque?" (p. 10, 64).

"In the *sunya* chamber within, the door is made of *vajra*" ( p. 11, 69 ).

Besides these saints named above, there were more than two hundred celebrated saints and thinkers in India, during a period of about four centuries, of whom we know. Most of them have talked of *sunya* and *sahaja*. Here we shall give only a few specimens, which will show us that, in tracing the development of our doctrine, we cannot ignore their *vanis*.

Of them was Saint Akha. He says: "*Sunya* is not light, nor water, nor earth, nor air. It is beyond firmament. There is only—Not That. That *sunya* is without the three *gunas*: it has no concern with virtue and vice. It is not red, yellow, white, black or blue. There is neither movement nor fixity. How then can one describe the *sunya* ! O Akha! recognise that God who is like *akasa* in the heart of the guru" (*Anubhava Bindu*, Chappai 6 ).

Again: "The way-farer is *sunya*, ether is *sunya*, the shadow of the devotee is *sunya*" (*Akha-krta-kavya*, II, p. 202).

"That *sunya* is beyond ether: it has neither form nor name. When I looked out for *sahaja-sunya*, I discovered the region of fulfilment" ( *ibid.*, p. 202 ).

"*Sahaja-sunya* is not only not negative: it is a thing to be courted and loved" ( *ibid.*, p. 202 ).

So also Khimji has said: "The intoxicated yogi sat on *sunya*. What sport was going on all around! What was subjective became objective, and everywhere was sport" (Khimji Sahib, *Yoga Vedanta Bhajana Bhandara*, p. 43, pada, 2).

Among the Auls, Bauls, Natha-panthis and the Niranjans of Bengal, we find an abundance of relevant matter which, however, is quite beyond the ambition of this paper to exhaust. Here we must be content with a few references: "*Sunya* is free, like free infinite space. No seed can sprout, no life can move unless there

is free *akasa*. *Akasa* is the indispensable space; it is the refuge of the life of movement. It is also the indispensable receptacle of the life of consciousness."

"There is *sunya* within ourselves: there is eternal freedom there. In that *sunya*-chamber, we may meet our Beloved. That is the only fit place for union with the Beloved and for eternal love."

Bauls sing: "Guru must be *sunya*, for he never crushes down the potential life and the spiritual individuality of his disciple. Guru inspires and fosters; never smothers."<sup>1</sup>

"Brahma is *sunya* ; *mukti* and *nirvana* are also *sunya*."

"*Parabrahma* may be realised only in *sahaja-sunya* within."

"You may realise Him," says Gangarama, "in your *sunya*-chamber, otherwise all is darkness."

Says Baul Bisa: "Alas! the *rasa* which wells up between *rupa* and *a-rupa* has not been realised by you. If you could comprehend the wonderful Thatness, you would be inebriated and would realise your *sunya* ( void ) as *purna* (full)."<sup>2</sup>

A Baul *vani* of North Bengal says: "We can realise our *sunya* if we properly balance our *sadhana* by uniting *Siva* and *Sakti* within us."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> শুক গোবে কিছু পেবে না ।

<sup>2</sup> বলা বলে বিদ্যা তালকানা,  
রূপ অরূপের রয় মাঝে রয়,  
তার স্বরূপ পাইলা না !  
ও সেট বুঝলে তব্ব হইতি যত  
দেখতি শূন্য পূর্ণাকার ।

<sup>3</sup> This article in a more complete form has been accepted for publication by the All India Oriental Conference at their last Baroda Sessions.

## THE KOPAI\*

Rabindranath Tagore

Idly my mind follows the sinuous sweep of the Padma † roaming under a distant sky. On the further side of hers stretches the sand-bank, insensitive to the living world, defiant in its sublime inutility.

On this side crowd the bamboo, the mango tree, the patriarchal banian; the obsolete hut in ruins; the aged jack tree of a massive trunk; the mustard field on the slope of the pond; the cane bush round the ditch by the lane; the remnant walls of an indigo plantation clinging to a silenced time, its row of casuarinas murmuring day and night in the forsaken garden.

The colony of Rajbanshis dwell there near the rugged bank fractured into zigzags, offering a scanty pasture to their goats; in the adjacent upland the corrugated roofs of the market storehouses keep staring hard at the sun.

The whole village stands shuddering in constant fear of the heartless stream.

The proud river has her name in the venerable texts; through her veins runs the sacred current of the Ganges.

She remains remote. The homesteads she passes by are tolerated by her, not recognised; her stately manner has a response in it to the majestic silence of the mountain and the large loneliness of the sea.

Once I had my boat secured at the landing slope of one of her islands in an isolated distance, far from all responsibilities.

I opened my eyes before the gaze of the morning star in the

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\* A modest, though coquettish river that half encircles Santiniketan,

† A mighty river that thunders midway through Bengal.

dawn, and slept on the roof under the constellation of the seven sages.

The heedless water ran by the edge of my desolate days. even as the traveller walking close to the joys and sorrows of the wayside homes, yet free from their appeal.

Now at the end of my young days I have come away to this plain here, grey and bare of trees, allowing a small detached spot for the swelling green of the shadow-sheltered Santal village.

I have for my neighbour the tiny river Kopai. She lacks the distinction of ancient lineage. The primitive name of hers is mixed up with the loud-laughing prattle of the Santal women of countless ages.

There is no gap for discord between the land and water in her intimacy with the village and she easily carries the whisper of her one bank to the other. The blossoming flaxfield is in indulgent contact with her as are the young shoots of rice.

Where the road comes to an abrupt break at the brink of her water she graciously makes way for the passers-by across her crystal-clear garrulous stream.

Her speech is the speech of the humble home, not the language of the learned. Her rhythm has a common kinship both with the land and the water; her vagrant stream is unjealous of the green and golden wealth of the earth,

Slender is her body that glides in curves across shadows and lights, clapping hands in a tripping measure.

In the rains her limbs become wild like those of the village girls drunk with the *mahua* wine, yet she never even in her wantonness breaks or drowns her neighbouring land; only with a jesting whirl of her skirt sweeps the banks while she runs laughing loud.

By the middle of autumn her waters become limpid, her



Beende Mutterjes

KORAI

Pl. III.



current slim, revealing the pallid glimpse of the sands underneath. Her destitution does not shame her, for her wealth is not arrogant, nor her poverty mean.

They carry their own grace in their different moods, even as a girl when she dances with all her jewels aglimmer, or when she sits silent with languor in her eyes and a touch of a tired smile on her lips.

The Kopai in her pulsation finds its semblance in the rhythm of my poet's verse, the rhythm that has formed its comradeship with the language rich in music and that which is crowded with the jarring trivialities of the work-a-day hours.

Its cadence fails not the Santal boy lazily tramping along with his bows and arrows; it times itself to the lumbering market cart loaded with straw; to the panting breath of the potter shouldering earthen-wares in a pair of hanging baskets tied to a pole, his pet pariah dog fondly following his shadow; it moves at the pace of the weary steps of the village schoolmaster, worth three rupees a month, holding an old torn umbrella over his head.

Santiniketan,

17 March 1935.

( translated )



## MA'ARRI THE FREETHINKER

By M. Ziauddin

*"Untruth has corrupted the world and each wrangling sect exalts its own gospel ; I say, if hate had not been in the nature of man, churches and mosques would have flourished side by side."*<sup>1</sup>

Freedom of thought was characteristic of the original Islam. Individual's right to differ in opinion was conceived by Muhammad as mercy of God. The social and religious principles inculcated by him were broad and simple. The whole scheme worked round the fundamental assertion of the unity of Godhead ; and round this central point of faith Muhammad called upon humanity to gather and thus be saved from division and destruction. This scheme of bringing into harmony the diverse races and religions and uniting them in freedom, failed in its purpose—because of this very insistence on becoming universal which the older religious systems resisted ; and so eventually Islam was forced into a separate cult, asserting its identity against the rest, which it had been its purpose to harmonise into one. However, its inherent simplicity remained intact for some time and kept it extremely tolerant, receptive and comprehensive in general attitude. Apart from the respectful attitude that early Muslims had for the founders of different religious systems, great credit should also be given to them for the spirit of toleration they showed to the freethinkers of their own community.

What is particularly worthy of admiration is that the early Muslims not only tolerated but appreciated, even revered, such an anti-Islamic poet and freethinker as Abul-'Ala Ma'arri. "Remarkable it is," observes Von Kremer, "that, while in Europe, precisely at that time, a bloody war of extermination was being waged against Albigenses, in Islam the poet (Ma'arri) was allowed to avow and sing his note of free-thinking, without let or hindrance."<sup>2</sup> "It is astonishing", remarks R. A. Nicholson, "to reflect that a spirit so unconventional, so free from dogmatic prejudice, so rational in spite of his pessimism and deeply religious notwithstanding his attacks on revealed religion, should have

1. Ma'arri, *Lusumiyat*, Cairo, (1891), II. p. 82.

2. *Islamic Civilization* II. p. 247.

ended his life in a (Muslim) Syrian country-town some years before the battle of Senlac."<sup>1</sup>

Abul-'Ala Ma'arri, the blind Arab poet, was a thinker of a breadth of vision the like of which humanity has produced only very rarely. Honest to the core of his heart, he embodied in his person the very fire of the freedom of mind, and was "one of the greatest moralists of all time, whose profound genius anticipated much that is commonly attributed to the so-called modern spirit of enlightenment."<sup>2</sup>

Ma'arri was born in 973 A. D. and died in 1057 A. D. at Ma'arra, a town in Northern Syria. When about four years of age he had the misfortune of a severe attack of small-pox which rendered him blind. After his preliminary studies at home, under the guidance of his father, he was sent for his education at first to Aleppo and then to Tripoli and Antioch.<sup>3</sup> After having completed his courses, he went to Aleppo again, this time to practice the art he had specialized in, namely that of an encomiast. He wrote for some time his panegyrics on courtiers, but soon got disgusted with the business and came back to his native town. Here he joined a public educational institution in the capacity of a lecturer in Arabic poetry and philology at the bare annual income of thirty *dinars*. His students were not slow in realising his greatness, and gave him their enthusiastic appreciation and honour. The reputation thus acquired brought him also the patronage of the courtiers who occasionally rewarded him liberally for the panegyrics he wrote for them. It was during this period that he completed his *Saqt-az-Zand* (*Sparks in the Fire-Stick*).

Finding Ma'arra too small a town for the display of his poetic talents, he came to Baghdad, the capital of the Muslim empire. Here he at once got the opportunity for reciting his poems in the most select assemblies of the *litterateurs* of the capital, who admired him greatly. At Baghdad Ma'arri came in touch with the outstanding representatives of different creeds whom Baghdad had attracted because of its liberal intellectual atmosphere. Here the Jews, Christians, Budhists, Brahmins, Zoroastrians, Manicheans, Mystics, Rationalists, even rank Materialists, had gathered to contribute their share to the

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1. *Literary History of the Arabs*, (Nicholson), p. 324.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 316.

3. *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. 8, pp. 222, 223.

commonwealth of human knowledge. Ma'arri was soon fed up with all of them. Before eighteen months had elapsed, he left the capital for his home, with the grim intention of shutting himself away from society and the world. However strong that desire for ascetic seclusion might have been, the poet in him was never conquered and he could never completely sever himself from men and their company. Moreover as his genius had been widely recognized by then, students came to him from all parts of the empire to attend his lectures. At this period of his development he gave up his cherished theme of ridiculing the political and religious institutions. He took up Man instead and meditated on him, apart from any creed and nationality to which he might belong. He saw before him the problem of humanity as such and not that of races or individuals defined by their peculiar limitations and conventions. At this stage of his intellectual progress he completely shook off such remnants of dogma as had escaped his analytic eye till then. This is also the period in which he wrote his best work *Luzumiyyat*. The work is notable for its freedom of vision, its uncommon boldness of expression and originality of style, though very deeply coloured with the saddest hue of pessimism. His poetry is frank and straight-forward, smooth in its flow and vigorous in its enunciation of his ascetic creed. He, however, successfully avoided exciting the fury of the orthodox. He has good deal of that sort of stuff in his poetry which may be said to have been put in deliberately to throw dust in the eyes of the orthodox and to put them off the scent. He admits this frankly: "It is society," he says, "that compels me to play the hypocrite."<sup>1</sup> "I raise my voice to utter absurdities aloud while truth I only whisper in hushed voice."<sup>2</sup> "Hide thy thoughts even from thy bosom friend."<sup>3</sup> Yet Ma'arri was not so cautious as he paints himself to be. For, inspite of all his caution, he pronounced blasphemies loud enough. Nor did he escape the vigilant orthodox eye, though he was never persecuted.

When he discusses the nature of religion Ma'arri's views are astonishingly modern. He considers religion to have sprung

1. *Luzumiyyat*, II p 139.

2. *Ibid.*, II p. 36.

3. *Ibid.* (Luzumiyyat) I 272

from the double source of human fear and greed. To him divine revelation could never be a fact; he simply refuses to discuss this point and ignores it completely. Religion is defined by him as a product of the human mind, the result of the education and training by the society and its conventions, which force men to believe in what their forefathers have believed. Ma'arri does not believe in miracles either. His words in *Risalatul-Ghufran* (*The Epistle of Forgiveness*) are as clear as words can be:

"Sometimes you may find a man skilful in his trade, perfect in sagacity and in the use of arguments, but when he comes to religion he is found obstinate, so does he follow the old groove. Piety is implanted in human nature, it is deemed a sure refuge. To the growing child that which falls from his elder's lips is a lesson that abides with him all his life. Monks in their cloisters and devotees in the mosques accept their creed just as a story is handed down from him who tells it, without distinguishing between a true interpretation and a false. If one of these had his kin among the Magians, he would have declared himself a Magian, or among the Sabians he would have become nearly or quite like them."<sup>1</sup>

Naturally he does not spare any religion in his general onslaught: "The Muslims are stumbling and the Christians are gone astray," he declares, "the Jews are bewildered and the Magians are misled. Mankind is divided into two groups: that of the enlightened knaves and the religious fools."<sup>2</sup> At another place he says: "Men live as their fathers lived and behaved, and they follow their religion mechanically as their fathers did before."<sup>3</sup> He even doubts the value of their confession of faith: "In all your affairs you blindly conform to your tradition and remain satisfied; even your confession of faith, 'God is One', is a blind conformity."<sup>4</sup>

Ma'arri's remarkable work *The Epistle of Forgiveness* is characteristic of the cynical nature of his genius. That it should have survived notwithstanding its blasphemous contents surprises us most. Only two copies of it exist today, of which one is in the possession of R. A. Nicholson. He has described its contents in

1. *Lit. Hist.* pp. 317, 318; J. R. A. S. for 1902, p. 351.

2. *Lusumiyyat*, II, p. 201.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 248.

4. *Ibid.*, I, 252.

the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1900 and 1902. In it the poet surveys the Paradise and finds it inhabited by the heathen poets of Arabia. Allah, through His mercy which always exceeds His anger, forgives the heretics and lets them enjoy the Paradise of the Faithful. Hence the title of the work: *The Epistle of Forgiveness*. Here the poets are found discussing and arguing with each other in the presence of a certain 'Ali bin Mansur', and behave like perfect Bohemians. The remaining half of the work consists of the opinions of certain freethinkers of Islam whose verses Ma'arri quotes with remarks on their beliefs from the orthodox side which he himself represents.

Ma'arri's genius is critical and destructive; scepticism is its characteristic strain; and yet his views are not devoid of a positive moral background. Strangely enough, he seems to have been essentially religious though the thing he hates most is religion. His morality is based on the dictates of reason and conscience and not at all on any divine revelation. Underlying it all is a characteristic basis of monotheism, if belief in the almighty and inexorable Fate can be called monotheism. "Serve God alone and not his servants, for religion enslaves you while reason emancipates you." <sup>1</sup> This God is not the God of revealed religion but that of the intellectual necessity.

For guidance in life Ma'arri does not trust anything save reason: "Reason is the most precious gift," he says, "that you have received." <sup>2</sup> This is how he explains his position: "Religious traditions of yore have come down to us, which, if they were genuine, would of course be of a great importance, but they are badly attested. Hence consult your reason and heed not anything else. Reason is your best adviser on earth." <sup>3</sup> "Be guided by reason and follow whither it leads you." <sup>4</sup> Again: "My reason is indignant that it should be put aside against the opinions of the founders of the Maliki and Shafi'i schools of Jurisprudence." <sup>5</sup> "Reason, its thou alone that speakest the truth." <sup>6</sup>

Ma'arri considers reason to be by its nature antagonistic to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., I, p. 326.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., I, p. 151.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 288.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., II, p. 394.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., II, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., II, p. 196.

religion. For "it is not reason that gives birth to religion; religion is given to people by their kith and kin."<sup>1</sup> He cannot bear to see the spiritual mask that religion puts on the face of human tradition and habit. Again and again he points out to us the absurdity of those institutions that create malice and hatred between sections of mankind. "Whenever a new religion gets established, its adherents begin to condemn and revile other faiths: had it not been for this hate that is rooted in the human mind, churches and mosques would have arisen side by side."<sup>2</sup> Again he points out: "Truth is not to be found in the Pentateuch, and you may praise your Lord and pray, and go round and round the Ka'bah seventy times, not seven times, even then you may remain impious."<sup>3</sup>

Considering the philosophical view he subscribes to, Ma'arri was naturally sceptic of the absolute nature of holiness that religion tries to attain through rituals and spiritual exercises. "Nothing endures," proclaims the poet, "every thing is doomed to perish, even Islam itself. Moses taught and passed away. Christ succeeded him. Then came Muhammad with his five daily prayers. A new faith will come later, supplanting, outshining this. Humanity is thus hounded to death between yesterday and today."<sup>4</sup>

Religion, like all other created things, is doomed to perish, says he, and he is not sure of the existence of a thing known as 'soul' which might survive death. When all is said and considered about faith, he gives us his confession:

What is Religion? A maid kept close that no eye  
may view her;  
The price of her wedding-gifts and dowry baffles  
the woer;  
Of all the goodly doctrines that I from the pulpit  
heard,  
My heart has never accepted so much as a word.<sup>5</sup>

Yet Ma'arri is not without a strong moral background which he accepts as a sufficient basis for the span of life men are perforce

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., II, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> Z. D. M. G. vol. 31, p. 497.

<sup>3</sup> Z. D. M. G. vol. 31, p. 483.

<sup>4</sup> *Islamic Civilisation* (Khuda Bakhsh's translation) II, p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> *Lit Hist.* p. 321; Z. D. M. G., Vol. 31, p. 427.

to live through. This morality is based on reason and the individual's understanding of justice. He is an agnostic with regard to the nature of soul. If there be a soul, he is not sure if it carries away with it any portion of the mind. If one is to believe in a soul carrying within itself the memory of this life's events, then Ma'arri thinks the mind must accompany it. However that may be, he does not consider the theory of the transmigration of souls plausible either. He seems to have conceived of innumerable cycles of creation renewed after a general destruction of the whole thing. This is obviously an Indian theory of the cycles of *yugas* succeeded by *pralaya*.

Ma'arri believes in the practical value of such moral principles as are rational and withal beneficial to humanity. In his opinion: "Devout is he who, when he is able to feast his desires, abstains from them with courage." <sup>1</sup> Such a discipline is conducive to an enlightenment which progressively elevates man from simple animal life to a higher life commonly known as spiritual. Thus the exercise of virtue reveals the ethereal element in man or brings about the realisation of his spirit, while indulgence in passions drags man to the level of the brutes. But as regards the ultimate value of this moral discipline, as well as of the spiritual realisation that may follow, Ma'arri is frankly sceptic. At places he seems to question the results of strict morality, as when he says: "Among them the best are just like unfeeling rocks that commit no wrong and tell no lies." <sup>2</sup> (I suppose "the best" are the virtuous men.) Hence the note of futility of the whole thing which rings so strongly in his poetry: "You need not seek to better this world which God Himself never meant to be virtuous." <sup>3</sup>

Ma'arri's philosophy is decisively agnostic, if not positively sceptic. For him there exists no ultimate truth, no final certainty of knowledge, to which man can attain. All that man can arrive at is, at its best, a guess: "There is no certainty; my utmost effort at arriving at truth results only in mere opinion or conjecture." <sup>4</sup> Neither is there any possibility of arriving at certainty with regard to the nature of our being. "Colocynth knows not what gave it its bitterness, nor honey knows why it is so sweet;

<sup>1</sup> *Lusumiyat* II, p. 159.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, p. 23.

you ask me but I have no answer to offer, and the man who says 'I know', he is a liar." 1 No ground for certainty or finality on this earth, neither in argument nor in fact. Facts roll on eternally, the drama of world-history is interminably projected in the infinity of time and space. "Time is like a poem that rolls on eternally." 2

His logic (and probably his blindness too) forced him to adopt an ascetic life. Conscious of the doom of humanity, the wretchedness of the lot of man on earth, blindly led by a blind irrevocable futility, he chose to sing the song of hopelessness: "Whatever time holds within its grasp, it holds in ignorance, no use venting our anger on it." 3

Ma'arri is obviously much influenced by Indian thought. Now and then he makes a direct reference to Indian thoughts or customs. He praises the Indian habit of burning the dead, and argues in its favour. He also appreciates those Indian monks who burnt themselves alive to get rid of their existence. He considers injuring or killing an animal a grievous sin. Ma'arri remained a celibate all his life, and considered procreation a mortal sin in man, which he was proud never to have committed. It is said he desired a verse of his to be inscribed on his grave which ran: "This wrong was done to me by my father, but to none by myself." 4 And so he advised his friends: "If you love your children and want to be kind to them then leave them within your loins." 5 Marriage is a sufficiently grievous wrong that man can commit but polygamy is still more so; he thinks it is unjust to the wife and disastrous to the husband.

Ma'arri's ascetic principles are almost all to be found in the following poem:

"Sick in intellect and faith, yet harken to my announcement of truth. Show yourself not coarse by eating what has been thrown out of water, and adopt not as your food that which has been slain, consume not eggs, for their yolks are meant to feed developing chickens and not fair women. Practice not deceit upon birds who cannot defend their little ones, for violence is the worst

1 Ibid., I, p. 103.

2 Z. D. M. G. p. 47 : *Islamic Civilization* II, p. 245.

3 *Lit. Hist.* p. 321 ; Z. D. M. G. vol. 38, p. 522.

4 *Lit. Hist.* p. 317 · Margoliouth, op. cit., p. 133 of the Arabic text.

5 *Lu'umiyyat*, I, 397.



of misdeeds. Disturb not the honey-combs of the bees, which they have diligently filled with the scented nectar of flowers. They have not been gathered for strangers, but are intended for presents and friendly gifts. From all these misdeeds I have washed my hands. Ah! only I wish I had thought of them before I became grey."<sup>1</sup>

Again:

"Stain not your swords with blood, nor yet plunge your lances in gaping wounds. Delightful unto me are the ways of those that live like monks, only if they do not consume that which others have acquired by toil and effort."<sup>2</sup>



<sup>1</sup> *Lunumiyat*, I, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

## **GANDHI AND LENIN**

*.By Nirmal Kumar Bose*

In the midst of the gloom which encircles mankind on all sides, there are always men who struggle with the surrounding darkness, and succeed in saving their souls from its oppressive influence. Of such men in the present age, we can think of two, who bear the marks of having successfully fought that battle and whose lives bear testimony to the enormity of suffering through which they have had to pass. Lenin and Gandhi. Both these men resemble one another in their relentless pursuit of Truth, as well as in their great passion for the poor and the oppressed. Yet, in the matter of their inner convictions and attitudes, the two men stand widely apart from one another.

According to both Lenin and Gandhi, the world's suffering is to-day caused by the existence of an unjust system which allows one class of men to live upon the toil of another. The system not only blights the lives of those who are exploited, but degrades those who live by that act of exploitation. The system has therefore to be broken down if we want to make men happy; in this both Gandhi and Lenin agree. But it is in regard to their methods and the possible chances of the success of these methods, as well as to the mental attitudes which they bring to bear upon their task that the two seem to challenge one another.

Lenin believed that the unjust social and economic system of today exists because it is the exploiters who hold the power of the State in their hands. If once that power came within the control of the exploited, they would so build society anew as to make a repetition of the wrongs impossible. All his efforts were therefore directed to securing such revolution as would bring the State under the dictatorship of the proletariat; which would exercise its powers to remodel man's outlook as well as to make it impossible for any man to deprive others of the fruits of their labour.

Gandhi, however, holds quite a different view. He is radically opposed to the centralization involved in Lenin's scheme. He believes that such centralization is always dangerous because of the chances of corruption at the centre. If it be argued that good

men could be found to occupy the position at the centre, he asks, why should not they be found in sufficient number to run autonomous village units all over the country? Gandhi does not believe that the core of the problem lies in the authority of the State; nor that the evil is due wholly to those who hold that authority. He finds that the State can only exercise its power and abuse it ( as it does today), because men are afraid of violence all the while. The governors are cruel, selfish, and violent; while the governed are cowardly and afraid of losing their comforts and material possessions in defence of their rights. Those rights can only be won and maintained if we cast aside all fear of violence from our hearts and, also, if we ourselves labour with our own hands, i.e. do not live upon the labour of others. These two are the fundamental duties which we must fulfil so that we can enjoy the right of living a free and happy life; and conversely, it is the absence of these two which makes it possible for injustice to perpetuate itself.

All of Gandhi's efforts, therefore, are directed towards stamping out the fear of violence from our hearts: violence to our person and violence to our possessions. We must not only be non-violent ourselves but must be *unafraid* of the violence of others. And he proposes to achieve this by a system of constructive work on the one hand, and of progressive non-violent non-co-operation with those who might be in power, on the other. Gandhi believes that although such a type of revolution may appear to be a slow process, yet, in the end, it is the quickest revolution, as it is also the surest. In the very act of breaking down the present order, the masses evolve the necessary strength for self-rule, while all the class-interests which oppose them are automatically rooted out or sterilised in that process.

This difference in method between Lenin and Gandhi is really rooted in a fundamental difference in their respective faiths. For both, though practical, were essentially men of faith. Lenin held that man is a creature of circumstance; so that if he is to be made moral, he should be placed under conditions such that morality and self-sacrifice are stamped upon him through his environment; while any exercise of selfishness is, at the same time, rendered impossible. All his efforts were, therefore, directed towards the building up of an architectural system under which man should develop the habit of living a just and moral life. But Gandhi seems to have little faith in such morality evoked by circumstance. For him such a morality is untrue and, therefore, impermanent. He be-

believes that Man is the master of Form and not Form that of Man. Permanent changes can come only from within, and our principal object should therefore be to help the individual to grow more moral and more heroic from within. Any change in social form must only be an expression and a measure of man's inward progress.

Gandhi is characteristically Indian and individualistic in this respect. All his plans of social or political reform are so designed that men can work them either in company or alone; and more perfectly when alone than otherwise. We may characterize the difference between Lenin and Gandhi by saying that the former builds his hopes upon man as he actually is, while the latter upon what it is possible or what it is desirable for him to be. But whether it is wiser in the end to rely more upon possibility than upon actuality is more than one can say.

Lenin was like a mighty warrior who held aloft a great hope for mankind, while his soul was steeped in the dream of a millennium when no man should live in idleness and all would live in love and employ their talents to serve their community. With a strong taste for reality, he turned to History for a sanction of the hope which burned within him, and there he discovered the finger of Fate pointing towards such fulfilment. It is because of the fatalistic nature of this belief that Lenin could employ the most pitiless means of destruction to overcome the obstacles that hampered him in his march. The path may lie today, so he thought, through violence and hatred, but the day will come when it will be time to lay down the sword or perhaps melt it for building the plough, for then man will have no reason to hate man. But until that day arrives, our path must lie through violence and bloodshed, for that is the inevitable law of History. Lenin was like a workman, passionately hammering away at his anvil in the night, in the red glow of a lamp which burned incessantly before him, while he was entirely oblivious of the dark sky which hung above his head. And in that sky, the cold stars shone with a glitter which knew no compassion for the love and the hate which burned within the bosom of the workman.

But Gandhi, the pilgrim soul, is ceaselessly on the march in a journey which is without end. With the staff of the beggar in his hand, he travels towards a distant light which draws him inexorably towards itself. Hope burns within him and he yields to its impulse, for there is nothing else for him to do. In the inner

depth of his being, he knows that it is not his business to ask if ever the millenium will come or not. All that he is called upon to do, at the present moment, is to submit to the forces of his nature and thus fulfil the task for which he was appointed by God. "To become like the clay in the Potter's divine hand", is his ideal. And that is also the reason why he can say in true humility that his task is the "service of God and therefore of humanity."

Gandhi believes that God never admits us into the design of the future. He has given us no control over the end, and only a limited one over the means; which means is love. And Gandhi claims that he has discovered the secret whereby love could be used to transform one's environment, and free human life from the oppression which is weighing upon it. That secret is to love the oppressors of mankind as oneself, even while we are opposing them by active non-co-operation in order to wreck the system for which they stand. It is a terribly difficult task to which he calls us, to oppose a tyrant even while bearing no malice in our heart against him. But as this is also the noblest path, Gandhi asks us to spare no pains in following it perfectly. All his genius is exercised in discovering this path of love in the midst of worldly conflicts: the results he leaves in the keeping of God.

But weak as we are, our strength fails when we are confronted by the dreariness of this march. We find that this cheerless concentration upon the means only leaves us despairing of our own weakness. So we turn to Gandhi with the question: why is it wrong to be intoxicated with a dream and a hope when darkness presses upon our souls from all around? Gandhi answers: indeed, you should believe in the promise of the day when man shall disdain to enrich himself at the cost of his neighbour and all will live in work and love; but, in the meanwhile, take care of the means.

Secretly, to the chosen few who can bear it, he whispers a less luring truth. To them, Gandhi says, the promise of the dawn is but a bait with which God tempts His creatures into action, along paths which He chooses. And if He so wills, He might anyday sweep aside all our hopes and joys and hurl us into the depths of unutterable misery, for He is above all the greatest tyrant ever known. Our business is to toil ceaselessly at our appointed task, and throw ourselves against every obstacle which oppresses human life, without regard to the consequences. We belong to the gang of workmen employed to keep the road ready

for God's chariot to pass by. Even with regard to his motherland, he says that it is true he wants his countrymen to enjoy political freedom, he wants food and raiment for the hungry millions; but these are only the things with which India will clothe herself before she is called upon, in the interest of humanity, to embrace Death as her divine bridegroom. "My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free that, if need be, the whole country may die, so that the human race may live."

These are indeed awful words. But Gandhi consoles us by saying that the powers of patience which reside within the soul are also unlimited. If we throw aside all our attachment to the body, which is the source of all fear, and have our being in God, who is the repository of all strength, we shall never lack in the necessary strength to bear His message of love in our lives.

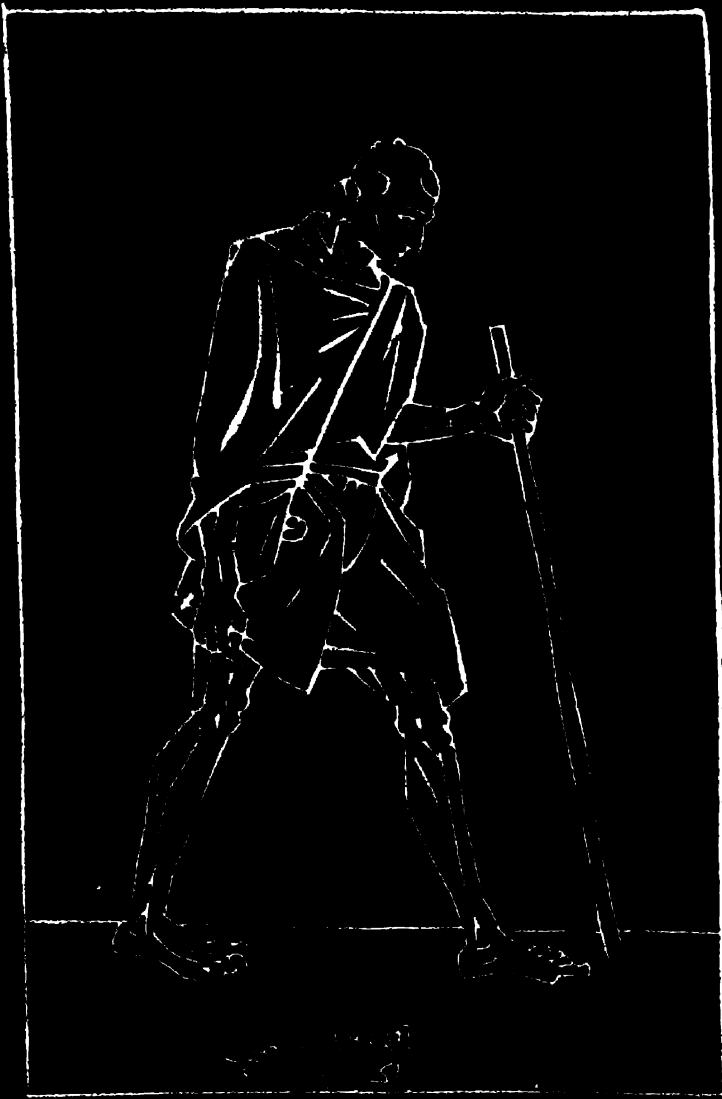
This is the prospect which Gandhi holds out to his comrades: no vision of any distant millenium, only the vision of the thorns which we shall encounter in our pilgrim march. He shows us only the way, even while seeking it himself, whereby we can lay down our lives so that humanity may live. And in that path God himself is transformed into the Flaming Sword which leaps and plays over the road of thorns. The sole aim of our existence is to surrender ourselves to that Almighty Being. Our own joys and sorrows sink into the uttermost insignificance, while life and death are transformed into so many milestones on our lonesome march.

This ultimate acceptance of the permanent nature of that which is sorrow and suffering to us, and from which we shrink instinctively in our personal attachment to life, does not spring in Gandhi from any inner morbidity of spirit. It comes from a recognition of the fact that both light and darkness, life and death, are parts of one Universal Being, which we may not accept in fragments. It is this aspect of Gandhi, with its apotheosis of suffering, which has often drawn forth the instinctive repulsion of the poet Tagore, whose admirable temper has now and then been ruffled by the prospect of a flood of morbidity overcoming the land in the wake of Gandhi's political movement. But in Gandhi himself there is not the least trace of morbidness, for his soul has been bathed clean by the tears of humble admission of weakness before God.

If that be the character of Gandhi's philosophy, devoid of hope, of romance. how is it, it might be asked, that men follow him in

thousands even when he asks them to follow on such a dreary road? The secret of this lies, not in his philosophy but in the personality of the man. And here perhaps we reach not only the inner truth of the present revolution in India, but of all great movements in the history of the world. Russia today is inexplicable except in terms of Lenin, the Christian movement is equally so without Jesus, while India's *Satyagraha* is likewise understandable only with reference to the character of the man who leads it today.

A lone man, marching with set purpose upon the road of God, whose heart beats in tune with the sufferings in every human breast, determined to share their sufferings or to sacrifice himself in the attempt to oppose all that oppresses them; such a character holds an appeal far greater than the cold star of truth towards which the pilgrim may be marching himself. It is good to live at a time when such men are born on earth, for their living testimony to the might of the human spirit restores to us courage and life, and gives us the strength to throw off the dead weight of the centuries.



**BAPUJI (GANDHIJI)**

**By Nandalal Bose**





## DOLLS

*By* Abanindranath Tagore

We have dolls as playthings for children; marionettes for play-acting of larger size; life-size, and sometimes larger than life, caricatures, effigies and clowns. Toy dolls are about span high, thumb long, and smaller, down to miniature size.

Clay, wood, pith and paper are the materials of which our dolls are made. Toy dolls are first made in the rough by the potter or carpenter, whereupon the decorator steps in to do up the features and put in the colouring, before they finally find their way to the shops. The making of idols for worship is much on the same lines. The potter makes the figure according to tradition, with dress folds, ornaments, and crown, complete. The



decorator then adds the colouring of body, features and robes, the tinsel hat and other appurtenances. In the case of the play-acting marionettes, the carpenter makes the body and limbs separately, and the play-actor loosely fastens the limbs to the body with strings, so that they may be moved as required. The dresser follows, colouring and dressing them up, on the eve of the performance, for the parts they are intended to play. The animals



and birds that are to come on the stage are designed by the carpenter on a common pattern, and subsequently made up to suit the occasion,—the addition of mane or stripes, for instance, converting the same dummy into lion or tiger. This kind of co-operation between the several artists is made to serve all the purposes of the play.

There are mainly three kinds of dolls or toys: (1) Immobile—such as a figure of Ganesh, or a fat woman-figure with a stump in place of legs to be dressed up by the playing child.



(2) Partly mobile—such as palm-leaf sepoy with jointed arms and legs jerked into martial attitudes by strings attached to a bamboo spring; pith birds and fishes, dangling on strings from a supporting frame, swaying to the breeze. (3) Toys on wheels—such as

clay carts, wooden or metal horses; etc.



Whistling tin birds or squeaking celluloid babies are beyond the resources of our toy makers. Our marionettes go through their movements in obedience to the string-pulling of the play actor and do their squeaking by proxy through his assistant.

Our old doll types are no longer to be seen in all their variety; some have even changed their forms and decorations to suit modern taste. Some idea of the different kinds of dolls or toys that were in use may be gathered from our nursery rhymes. I give a few examples :



(1) The Moon Doll :—"Moon on her arms, moons on her feet, a moon on her forehead doth shine."

(2) The Car of Thirteen Spires :—"O look sister, how wonderful! the confectioner over the way has made a car with thirteen spires, and a monkey holding the banner."

(3) The Nodding Old Man :—"The aged one's head nods and nods, with a myna perched on top."

(4) Gopal (Krishna) :—"Who says Gopal is flat-faced ? I have brought clay from Sukhchar to make a straight nose for him. Who says Gopal is dark ? I have brought turmeric from Patna to make his complexion shine." etc.



(5) Animals :—"The Shy Cat", "The Royal Elephant", "The Black and White Cats of Shasthi", etc.

(6) There are the Smiling Doll, the Jolly Doll, the Merry Doll, the Crying Doll, and other descriptions the meanings of which cannot now be traced.

(7) A Queen Doll made of fire-wood is still to be seen in Kalighat shops.

The following portion of a fairy tale gives us a picture of the making of a doll queen.

"Four companions were going from one village to another. Dusk fell while they were passing through a wood before their journey's end, and they had to stay the night under a tree. The carpenter's son took the first watch. To while away the time he cut off a branch and carved a woman doll. The decorator's son took the second watch. He shaped the eyes and nose, gave golden colour to the body and rose colour to the palms and soles, and seated the naked doll under the tree. The weaver's son took the third watch and dressed her in veil and all. The



king's son woke last, and in the fourth watch he chanted a magic spell, learnt from a holy man, which gave her life; then placing her in a palanquin, he took her away with him."

Kalidasa's drama called *The thirty-two Dolls* was evidently intended to be played with marionettes. The stage directions show that the dialogue had to be rendered by the play actor called "the speaker". The king sits on the throne with due pomp and circumstance. To him comes a magician, and invokes a super-human being, tall as a palmyra tree, with sword to match, who leads by the hand a beautiful maiden. Gods come on the scene, and engage in a terrific battle with demons, in the course of which the floor is strewn with headless trunks, whereupon all the dolls on the stage register different degrees of alarm; and so on.

Why should we not take a leaf out of Kalidasa's book and have our own marionette plays even to-day?



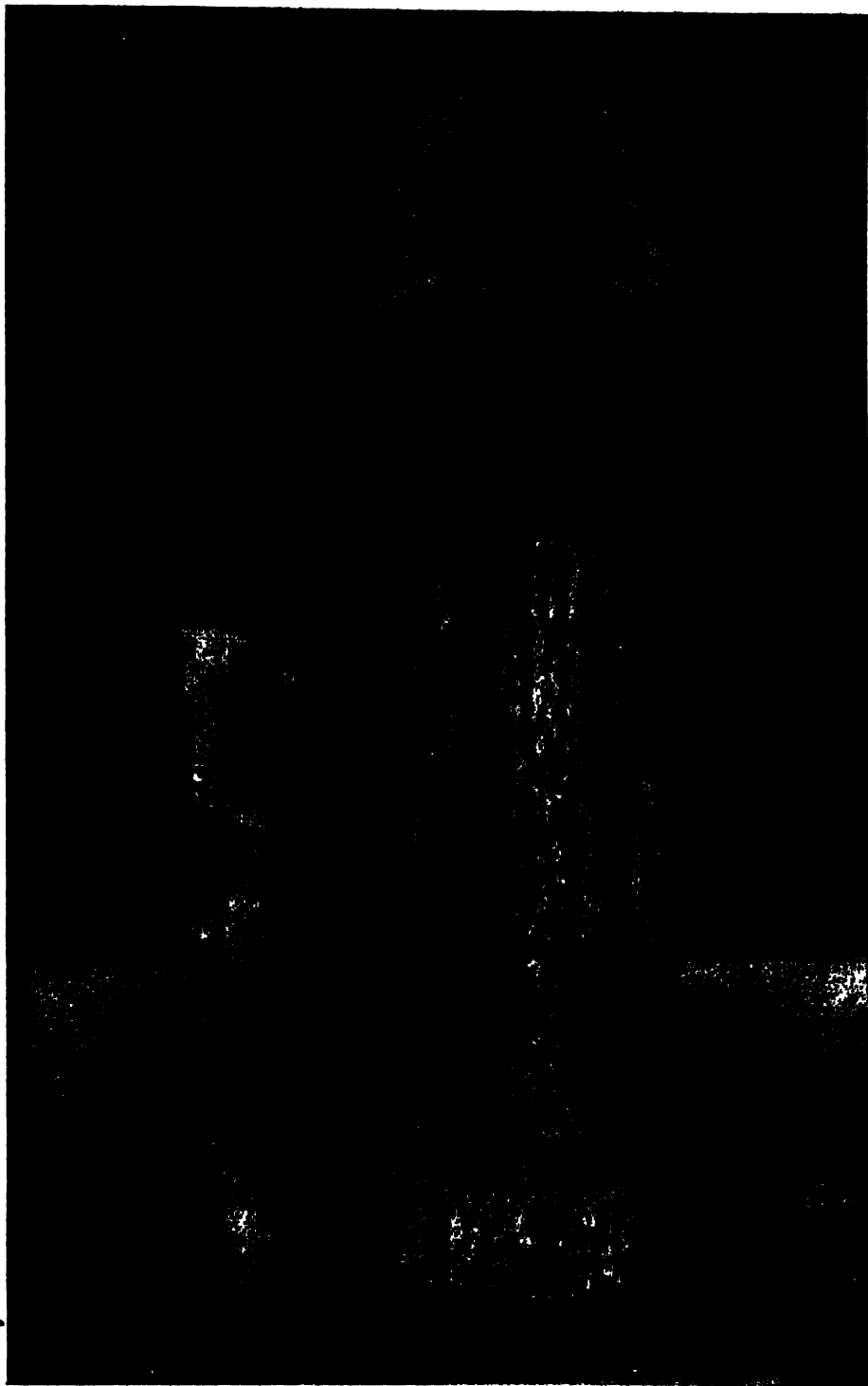
## **A DOLL FROM BENGAL**

This ( Pl. VII ) is a typical wooden doll found all over Bengal. It varies in its decorations and colours in different districts but the form remains the same.

This particular one was bought in Kenduli in Birbhum District. The colour of the head, arms and feet is yellow. Upper garment covering the body below the waist is blue and green. The details and decorations of the figure are drawn with black and red thick brush lines.

Mr. Nandalal Bose says it is not possible for him to say when this toy was introduced in Bengal but the back of this toy resembles the back of the stone statues of Vishnu and other gods. He also feels that they somehow look like Egyptian Mummy cases.

Size of the original doll:— $10\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3''$ .



Pl. V

A Doll from Bengal



## **IS ART TWO OR ONE ?**

*By Surendranath Tagore*

In following the recent pictorial art movements in Bengal, which have largely dominated those in other parts of India as well, we come across a divergence between two types of art, variously contrasted as Oriental and Occidental, symbolical and representational, or idealistic and realistic. This divergence tends to be accentuated by rival art institutions and their respective supporters, to the point of antagonism. Unfortunately but few attempts are made to penetrate to the original difference which takes these several forms, in order to see whether there is really any irreconcilable opposition between the two. I here offer my train of thought to those who enjoy excursions into such speculations.

What is the origin of the art impulse? The artist, I take it, receives some appealing message which moves him to communicate it,—a message that may come either as an idea requiring to be depicted, or as a ready-made picture embodying some idea. I dare not venture, just yet, beyond the adjective “appealing”, because “beautiful” does not always seem to fit the message as delivered even by acknowledged artists,—ugly-looking subjects not necessarily lacking appreciation; nor may “delightful” always be apposite, in view of the painful subjects sometimes portrayed.

Whence come these messages? Not always from the ordinary world in which man commonly lives and moves, the world of nature with which the physical sciences are concerned. For in this very life, man has his being in more than one world at a time, his conscious life not remaining confined to this one, but ranging over different levels, from the highest mystic state down to bestial depths, with all sorts of spiritualistic abnormalities and pathological oddities in between; and beings or events in any of such worlds may motivate the artist, to whose consciousness they present themselves, to become the instrument of their expression.

We need go no deeper for what seems to be a fundamental distinction to become apparent. It is the distinction between man's art-relations with the phenomenal world of Nature on the one hand, and on the other with those other worlds that are or may be variously called mystical, supernatural, subliminal, ecstatic, or



of the former may be tentatively called mundane, and the other ultra-mundane, so long at least as the difference involved in the distinction seems to require separate naming.

In the case of mundane art, the artist has to do with a world of forms in a perpetual state of flux which he has, in the first instance, to capture in static shape (so far as the material, technique, and skill at his disposal permit) before he can proceed to deliver the message he has received, by a suitable employment of the elements,—form, colour, light and shade, composition, etc.—that serve as its language. Even by votaries of this type of art, however, the aesthetic value is no longer now-a-days supposed to depend on the accuracy of the copies thus made of natural objects as appearing to the human eye, but is conceded to lie in some subtle quality or effect over and above all that is portrayed.

In the case of the ultra-mundane type, from whichever of the other worlds the messages may be coming, they seem to have this much in common that their expression does not demand the portrayal of natural objects as seen; for we find in the resulting works of art, figurations that may not be like anything about us, or situations never met with in the sensible world,—such as angels with birds' wings, many-headed, multiple-armed divinities, tree-like forms resembling no earthly specimen, shadows lying where natural light would not have thrown them, compositions as a whole ignoring perspective and mechanics alike,—in obedience to some dictates of the message itself, not in accord with the laws of nature, nor even following any conscious purpose of the artist, though doubtless modified by his personality and limited by his technical equipment. But the significance of the message, transcending as it does the language in which it is delivered, is neither so modified nor limited, whence it may sometimes be more effectively explained by some third person better attuned to the world from which it comes, than by the artist himself through whom it was originally transmitted.

Already, I think, we have arrived at a better position to understand how the distinction between these two types of art happens to be so variously described.

Ever since India first received the impact of European culture, the westerner, as a rule (to which, however, there have always been notable exceptions) has been found to confine his

as well, to the world of Nature, so that the type of art we have called mundane tends to be thought of as Occidental. Similarly, though of late economic and other exigencies have driven it to concern itself more with the superficial world of appearances, the Indian mind is the inheritor of an age-long tradition of adventuring into higher levels of being; so that, whether or not present-day Indians succeed in actually reaching these levels, and although ultra-mundane influence is by no means unknown even in the modern West, yet art so influenced comes to be called Oriental.

Then again, in any type of art, natural objects may find a place for the sake of their own features, or as symbols of some idea; some animal, for instance, may be brought into a particular composition for the beauty of its shape or colour, or merely to show the ugliness of a sentient creature being used as beast of burden. But since ultra-mundane art can hardly be supposed to avail of earthly forms except as indicative of some extraneous idea, it exclusively appropriates the terms ideal or symbolical. While on the other-hand, because those who abide mostly in the work-a-day world get into the habit of looking on its phenomena as the only realities, the art which employs representations of these as its language claims to be realistic, despite the fact that to those who are fortunate enough to come into touch with some better world, it is this fluctuating one which appears less real.

All these differences, however, thus set forth, are seen on the face of them to be unimportant, their perfunctory character being further brought out if we go into what is called the teaching of art. Teaching, in such case, can only mean providing the budding artist with the necessary technical equipment; that is to say, in an art school the student is merely taught to use the language of art,—the delineation of forms, the production of colour effects, the methods of composition, and the like. For this purpose, the copying of natural objects, or of old masters, may well afford useful training, irrespective of the type of art in which the student may eventually find his vocation.

What then becomes of the distinction which at the outset appeared fundamental? It is not at bottom a difference in man's art-relations, as at first seemed to be the case, but in the art-language employed, which, whether it consists of forms as seen to occur in nature, or of combinations of forms that do not so occur, equally

pressed. And if the proof thus be in the result, it also matters little whether the artist was working out an idea received, or reproducing a vision seen. In neither case does the art message consist of the thing or things depicted, and in both cases the true artist appears to be reduced, for the time being, to the condition of a more or less passive medium, through whom the message itself selects the subtle elements needed for its own expression.

How the student can arrive at the point of giving to the art-language, as learnt by him, the essential æsthetic quality characteristic of artistry, is a problem no art school can solve. This much is certain that it cannot be done by any amount of intellectual theorising about art, or by the industrious viewing of all kinds of art works, or by the laborious copying of the very best of them. It is invariably a case of inspiration received by one who is fit.

The way to attain such fitness can be, and in some cases, doubtless, is shown by some Master. But how his personality communes with the personality of the adept pupil, and helps the latter to attune himself to receive and deliver art messages,—is that even known to the Master himself? It is, at all events, a mystery beyond our present scope to attempt to unveil. Suffice it to note here that it is this mysterious element, inherent in the essential æsthetic quality, that resolves the types of art, seemingly two, into one.

Having started from the standpoint of pictorial art, our progress, so far, has naturally been on the same line. I feel sure, however, that had our excursion been into the province of any other kind of art, even a flight into the etherial regions in which music finds its forms, the details of the views unfolded might have been different, but not so the conclusion towards which we have been tending. Before arriving there let us take a look at the question of art values which has, all this while, lurked in the background.

It goes without saying that all is not art that attempts or purports so to be. Good receivers are not necessarily efficient transmitters. Entanglement in the subject or language may prove a bar to the necessary transcendence, resulting in a picture that may be quite good as a record, or useful as scientific material, or meritorious as a display of skill, but nevertheless functionless as art. On the other hand, to transcend and yet fail to ascend; to take flight away from familiar ground, but fail to reach some lighted top: may lead to vain flitting amidst the dim regions of the

interesting, or amusing, or even thrilling, but still not of real value as Art. Lastly, as to messages from nether regions that exert a downward pull, their expression—if they at all need consideration—may be called inverted art, with negative values. Here we are concerned with that which is valuable art, not with its aberrations.

Our trend of thought now brings us to the point where we may assert with confidence that the value of a successful essay in Art is to be measured by its lifting power, be it the lifting of a chosen few to great illuminated heights, or of a larger multitude to summits which, if lower, are also heights with access to the light. Nor does the last difference indicate one of kind. An art message, once it has found expression, not only ceases to be restricted, as we have already noticed, by the limitations of the artist-medium, but is able to appeal to each beholder according to his capacity; the effective uplift thus being the resultant of the soaring pull of the message on the resisting drag of the recipient.

We may, at length, sum up our conclusions.

Art is the communication of messages, such as are not received through the senses, nor to be understood by process of reasoning; the receiving and transmitting artist being more or less of a passive medium. According to Western classical notion, such medium is born not made, though in art schools after the Western pattern, there is nevertheless supposed to be some virtue in the copying of works, whether of the Great Artist Himself, or of human Masters. Indian classic thought, for its part, looks upon the making of the artist (be the material he works upon, canvas, stone, or life itself) as consisting in a special orientation of his receptivity in respect of the source of inspiration, which turn may be given to his being by the combined effect of birth, self-culture, and favourable influences, and is capable of being helped on by mystic contact with one who has attained—the Guru or Master—who himself appears to act also as a passive medium. Both East and West, however, agree, whatever the process may be, that the value does not lie therein, but in the inspiration actually received. This inspiration, we conclude, thereupon contrives the delivery of its message, which, once delivered, is not dependent on the material language at the disposal of the medium, but is limited by the capacity of the recipient; so that the same message which takes the seer, the *rasika*, the connoisseur, to peaks of mystic realisation, may not do more than raise earth-bound souls to the top levels of their lower ranges.

Though not, like science, directly concerned with the sense impressions received from natural objects or events, art makes use as its language of their forms, colours, combinations or implications, only to rise free from them on the wings of its own message, incidentally carrying their evanescent beauty into luminous regions ( or, conversely, throwing on them a supernal light ) in which they become a joy for ever.

It is now clear that we need not, in the beginning, have fought shy of recognising beauty and joy to be essential qualities or concomitants of art. For a seemingly ugly subject is truly of art only when it draws us away from ugliness; an apparently painful subject when it reveals pain to be delusion. No message can really appeal to man unless its end be joy, the only finality, because, of all things, it alone is an end in itself. And wherever there is joy there also are light and beauty. Being in Joy is illuminated being. That which is seen in the light of Joy is Beauty.

What then, after all, does the activity or play, such as is alone worthy of the name of Art, consist in? Some one or something sends a message;—who or what except Soul rejoicing in light? What message?—None else but the joy of light and beauty communicated to Soul in darkness. And to what end?—again the lighting up of Soul to such partial realisation, as may be, of ineffable Bliss, the ultimate meaning of all that is. The sender, the message, the receiver; the wayfarer, the path, the goal;—are they, then, also One?

## THE SIMILES OF DHARMADASA

By Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya

Candrakirtti (about 600-650 A. D.) was one of the great teachers of Buddhism. It is said that he was born in South India and showed remarkable intelligence in his infancy. He renounced the world and studied the whole of the *Tripitaka*. He also made a special study, with Kamala-buddhi, of the works of Nagarjuna; and became a teacher at Nalanda.

He wrote a number of works on the Madhyamika Philosophy. Among these works there are three commentaries on the following books of Nagarjuna:

1. *Madhyamakakarika* ( मध्यमकारिका ),
2. *Yuktisastika* ( युक्तिस्तिका ), and
3. *Sunyatasaptati* ( शून्यतासप्तति ).

The first book with its Tibetan version and Candrakirtti's *tika* ( टीका ) which is called *Prasannapada* ( प्रसन्नपदा ) is edited by Professor Poussin in the *Bibliotheca Buddhica*. His fourth commentary is on Aryadeva's *Catuhṣataka* ( चतुःशतक ). The original as well as the commentary in Sanskrit could not yet be found in their entirety. In 1914 only some fragments of both of them were edited by the late Pandit Hara Prasad Shastri under the name *Catuhṣatika* ( चतुःशतिका ) in the *Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Vol. III, No. 8, pp. 449-574). In 1923 Dr. P. L. Vaidya edited the last nine chapters (VIII-XVI) containing the Tibetan version with the original or reconstructed Sanskrit, together with a French translation by him in a volume entitled *Etudes sur Aryadeva et son Catuhṣataka*. Then in 1925 Prof. G. Tucci in *Revista degli Studi Orientali* (Vol. X, pp. 521 ff.) gave an Italian translation of the last eight chapters (IX-XXVI) from its Chinese version. In 1931 the present writer edited the last nine chapters (VIII-XVI) containing the original or reconstructed Sanskrit text, the Tibetan version, and copious extracts from the commentary by Candrakirtti.

Besides the works mentioned above Candrakirtti wrote another book, *Madhyamakavatara* ( मध्यमकावतार ). This is his independent and the most important work on the Madhyamika

system. Its original Sanskrit is not yet available, but there is a Tibetan translation which is edited in the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* and translated into French by Prof. Poussin in *Le Museon*, 1907, 1910.

The work was commented upon by Candrakirtti himself and he quoted it frequently in his commentary on the *Catuh-sataka*.

The first eight chapters of his commentary on the *Catuh-sataka* has a striking peculiarity which is not to be found in the last eight chapters, nor in his *Prasannapada*, the commentary on the *Madhyamkakarika*. This peculiarity lies in the frequent use of similes or *upamas* which are simple and charming and withal important in many respects. They are taken from life and nature, as well as from literature. Pandit Hara Prasad Shastri rightly observes (JASB, July, 1911, p. 434) that "they throw a flood of light on the manners and customs of the people and may contribute to the already rich folklore of India."

Of these similes Candrakirtti himself writes in his commentary on the *Catuh-sataka* (see the edition by the present writer, p. viii) that they were originally of one Acarya Dharmadasa. It is not yet decided who this Dharmadasa was. He may be identified with the author of *Vidagdhamukhamandana*, ( विदग्धमुक्तामण्डन ) who was a Buddhist.

As explained by Candrakirtti, some of these similes are collected here in the following pages, and it is hoped that they will be read with the popular maxims or apposite illustrations (*nyayas* न्याय) in Sanskrit as collected by Jacob in the *Laukika-nyayanjali* ( लौकिकन्यायानजलि ) (Nirnayasagar Press, Bombay).

The references after the similes in Sanskrit are to the pages of the edition by Hara Prasad Shastri.

### 1.

कोकिलपोतवत् ॥ p. 456.

Like the young one of a cuckoo.

The hard metals, tin, lead, silver, gold, etc. may become liquid by contact with fire, yet this state of their being is not their own; so one's body, in spite of its being attended by things causing happiness, is never claimed by happiness as its own. As the young one of a cuckoo, brought up by a crow, belongs only

to the cuckoo and not to the crow, even so the body is not of happiness.

## 2.

अधिकृतहस्त्यारोपितदर्शनमन्युपरितोषवत् ॥ p. 465.

Like the Superintendent's anger and satisfaction at seeing an elephant driver.

A king made a person mount an unruly elephant and said: "Drive it". The driver was successful. The king was pleased and rewarded him with honours. The Superintendent, however, was sorry at seeing the honour done to the man, and was both frightened and depressed. Once the king made another man mount the same elephant and ordered: "Drive it". But the second man was inferior to the first man and could not drive the elephant. The king sentenced him to corporal punishment. The Superintendent was greatly pleased at it. Here the pain to the one, the Superintendent, was mental, and to the second, the inferior driver, corporal. It is the mental trouble of great ones that arises from disrespect to them, and it is the corporal trouble of the inferior ones which is caused by beating them.

सपत्नीपुत्रसत्कारदुःखितावत् ॥ p. 457.

Like a woman who is tormented by the honour gained by the son of her fellow-wife.

Among two fellow-wives one lost her son while the other continued to live with her own. Whenever the former saw that the son of her fellow-wife was being honoured (by the people) she grieved over it. When she was asked: "Are you lamenting over your dead son, who was so dear to you?", she answered: "No, I am not lamenting over my son. I lament because the son of my fellow-wife is living on." After some time the son of her fellow-wife fell ill, and she happened to go to another village. When she returned she saw a dead body being carried through the



village, seeing which she imagined that the very son of her fellow-wife was dead. As she was relishing this imaginary pleasure, she was stung by a scorpion and her pleasure which was fancied was replaced by the pain of poison.

Therefore, there is nothing stronger than (corporal) pain.

4

दीर्घाध्वगवत् ॥<sup>1</sup> p. 457.

Like a traveller bound for a long journey.

As the troubles of a traveller, bound for a long distance, daily become more and more acute, owing to fatigue and the exhaustion of food in the course of his journey, even so the more the average man lives the more he feels the suffering of old age.

<sup>1</sup> See No 22.

5, 6.

( i ) राजदुहितुस्वयंवरप्रार्थनावत् ॥

( ii ) वैश्रवणदुहितुहरणमान्धातुवत् ॥ p. 458.

(i) Like the desire of a princess to obtain her choice.

(ii) And like Mandhatr abducting Vaisravana's daughter.

Those who desire a princess, who is choosing her own consort, are afflicted, for she is the cause of pleasure to one man only and not to all. Many men desire, but all do not succeed; consequently they remain distressed.

In the same way, as regards living beings, the causes of misery are many, while those of happiness are only a few.

And as in the case of the king, Mandhatr, abducting the daughter of Vaisravana (Kubera), owing to the fact of both being powerful, far more misery is caused than happiness.

मान्धातुपतनवत् ॥ p. 458.

Like the fall of Mandhatr<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Details are wanting in the fragments.

8i

. . . . p. 459.

A fortune-teller told a king: "It will rain and whosoever uses that water will become mad." The king for his own purpose got his well covered. It rained and his own people got mad having used the water. They all being of the same nature thought that they were all in their own natural state and it was the king himself who had gone mad. The king then had to use the same water which had been used by the people, lest the latter should laugh at him or drive him away. So if there be only one man diuretic he may be shunned like a leper, but when every man is diuretic what becomes of the notion of impurity?

In a country all the people were attacked with goitre (गल्नारु) and consequently they became extremely ugly. Now, there came a very beautiful man, but he was shunned by all as ugly and deformed.

1 The short Sanskrit line is wanting in the fragments

9, 10

( i ) द्रुतलिप्तं बिडालनासिकास्वादवत् ॥

( ii ) सुवर्णनासिकादर्शनमुष्टिबन्ध ॥ p. 459.

( i ) Like a cat's tasting its nose which is smeared with clarified butter.

( ii ) And like pleasure arising from seeing a golden nose.

When a man gives a hard lump of food to a cat which has its nose first anointed with clarified butter, the cat thinks that the lump is substantial. Again, when a man has no nose he is pleased at making and seeing an artificial golden nose. Similarly one, who has found a remedy for bodily impurity in flowers and such other things, feels a strong love for his body.

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## 11

एकस्येष्टानिष्टदुष्टिदर्शनवत् ॥ p. 460.

Like one seeing the daughter who was first cherished  
and then not cherished.

There was a merchant and when a daughter was born to him, he went abroad and came back at another time. The daughter, then blossoming into maidenhood, was playing with other girls in an outside garden of the town. Seeing the girl he felt a strong desire for her, but when he heard that she was his own daughter he felt aversion for her. Even so there is nothing that invariably produces desire.

## 12

पिशाचीस्वभावदर्शनमीतिवत् ॥ p. 460.

Like one frightened at seeing the nature of  
a she-devil.

There was a man and he got a wife who was a she-devil. He was treating her as his wife, but when he saw her hideous and obstinate character which was creating his misfortune, he was frightened and cried: "She is not my wife ! she is a she-devil !" And no longer was he drawn to her.

In the same way when the wise see the nature of worldly things which are compounded ( संयुक्त ) they become indifferent to them. For it is said: "That which is compounded is not permanent, and that which is not permanent is not good; that which is not good is not bliss; and that which is not bliss is without soul ( or nature )."

## 13

राजनटवत् ॥ p. 461.

Like the king's actor.

Just as the king's actor is at one moment a dancer, and then a king, and then a minister, a Brahmin, a householder, a slave, and so on; even so a king is never in a settled state, for he is to

act (different parts) on the stage (of the world, संसार ) consisting of five states.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There are five states of existence (*gati*) into which a being may be reborn after death. They are hell, the brute creation, the *preta* world, the world of men, and that of gods.

## 14

विश्वामित्रवशिष्ठजामदग्न्यवत् ॥ p. 462.

Like Visvamitra, Vasistha, and Jamadagnya.

[It is said in connection with this simile that a wise man should not follow all the practices of sages, nor are their scriptures authoritative; for there are three kinds of sages: inferior, intermediate, and superior. The above line has reference to the inferior class of sages.]

For we hear that Visvamitra committed theft and ate what was not to be eaten; Vasistha had illicit intercourse with a woman and Jamadagnya killed living beings (men).<sup>1</sup>

Visvamitra stole the flesh of a dog from Candalas (कण्डाल), Vasistha had intercourse with a Candala woman, named Aksamala, and Jamadagnya (=Parasuram) killed the king Kartavirya Arjuna and all the Ksatriyas on the earth twenty-one times.

<sup>1</sup>. See No. 30.

## 15

अजितसेनराजपुत्रवत् ॥ p. 463.

Like Prince Ajitasena.

A certain king told his minister: "After my death you shall place on the throne my brother, Prince Ajitasena." When the king died, the minister took advantage of a little defect in the Prince and got him killed, and seized the kingdom for himself. He had ill fame in this world and was called "The Vicious One", and in the other world there was a great sin against his name. So how could there not be ill-fame and sin for those kings who strike down others, having little defects?

आभिरी इवशुश्रूषीरदानवत् ॥ p. 464.

Like an Abhira woman's offering of her body  
to her father-in-law.

An Abhira woman whose husband had gone abroad, used to treat her father-in-law very contemptuously. When the son came back, the old Abhira told him all about it, adding: "If your wife treats me again contemptuously I will not live in your house." The son, being devoted to his father and not afraid of his wife, rebuked her and said: "If you despise my father there shall be no room for you in my house. You must do for him even what is difficult to do and you must give him even what is difficult to give." She promised to do it and the son went away again. Then the woman in fear began to serve her father-in-law with the greatest care. During day-time she served him with the best kind of bath, toilet, ointments, garlands, food and drink, etc. At night, having washed his feet with hot water and besmeared them with oil, she took off her clothes and, thus naked, attempted to get into his bed. The old Abhira exclaimed: "Thou wicked woman! What hast thou begun to do!" Replied the Abhira woman: "I was told by my husband: 'you must do for him even what is difficult to do, you must give him even what is difficult to give.' And there is nothing more difficult to do or more difficult to give than this." The old Abhira said: "This is a stratagem for getting me out of the house. Well, be satisfied! I will never remain in this house!" Having said so, he came out. By this time the son returned and not seeing his father there asked his wife about him. She said: "Sir, nothing was left undone by me. I served him with the greatest care giving him bath, toilet, ointment, food, and such other things, which all pleased him in all seasons." Then she told him all that had happened. The husband scolded her and turned her out from the house. He then propitiated his father and brought him back to his own house.

As the wicked Abhira woman's offering of the body was not received with respect, even so the wicked kings' sacrifice of life in battle is not treated with respect.

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(to be continued in the next Number)

## THE SANTAL WOMAN

*By* Rabindranath Tagore

The Santal woman hurries up and down the gravelled path under the *shimool* tree; a coarse grey *sari* closely twines her slender limbs, dark and compact; its red border sweeping across the air with the flaming red magic of the *palash* flower.

Some absent-minded divine designer while fashioning a black bird with the stuff of the July cloud and the lightning flash must have improvised unawares this woman's form; her impulsive wings hidden within, her nimble steps uniting in them a woman's walk and a bird's flight.

With a few lacquer bangles on her exquisitely modelled arms and a basket full of loose earth on her head she flits across the gravel-red path under the *shimool* tree.

The lingering winter has finished its errand. The casual breath of the south is beginning to tease the austerity of the cold month. On the *himjhuri* branches the leaves are taking the golden tint of a rich decay. The ripe fruits are strewn over the *amlaki* grove where the rowdy boys crowd to pillage them. Swarms of dead leaves and dust are capering in a ghastly whirl following sudden caprices of the wind.

The building of my mud house has commenced and labourers are busy raising the walls. The distant whistle announces the passing of the train along the railway cutting, and the dingdong of the bell is heard from the neighbouring school.

I sit on my terrace watching the young woman toiling at her task hour after hour. My heart is touched with shame when I feel that the woman's service sacredly ordained for her loved ones, its dignity soiled by the market price, should have been robbed by me with the help of a few pieces of copper.

Santiniketan,  
2 April, 1935.

(translated)



**A SANTAL WOMAN**

**By Nandalal Bose**





## THE FUNCTION OF LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

*By* Rabindranath Tagore

The world outside us, when it enters into our consciousness, becomes quite another kind of world. Though its forms, colours, sounds and the rest remain, they become tinged with our approval and disapproval, our wonder and fear, our pleasure and pain; and thus variegated with the manifold qualities of our feelings, this world is wrought into one that is intimately our own. Those who lack a sufficiency of digestive juices cannot effectively convert their food into vital parts of their own body. And, similarly, those who are incapable of saturating the outside world with the solvent of their emotions, fail to transform it into their world—the world of man.

The last are inert people for whose hearts but little of the world is of living interest. They remain deprived of the greater part of the world into which they are born. With but few windows to their hearts and of small opening withal, they pass their lives as exiles in the very midst of the universe. There are, on the other hand, those fortunate ones whose faculties of wonder, love and imagination are ever wide-awake. For them every chamber of nature offers a standing invitation. The pulsations of the concourse of humanity evoke in the chords of their being sympathetic modulations. In them is the outer world verily created afresh, in vivified colour and form, through the mould of their feelings.

The world which is thus progressively growing within minds endowed with sensibility is, as I was saying, more man's own than is the outside world. Born of the heart, it is more readily accessible to man's heart. Enriched with the gifts of his mind, it has a special attraction for man's mind. Such world is not content with offering us the bare information that this is black and that is white, this is big and that is small, but sings to us in many a strain of what is desirable and what is disagreeable,

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<sup>1</sup> This is the first of a series translated by Surendranath Tagore for *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly* from the original Bengali (*Sahitya*)—Ed.

what is lovely and what is repulsive, what is good and what is bad. This world of man flows on from mind to mind in an age-old current that is nevertheless always new, renewed from age to age by fresh senses and fresh hearts.

The question is, how is one to get hold of this world, by what means to keep hold of it? For unless it can be again projected outside in tangible form, it needs must be dissolved as it comes into being within us. But, having taken birth, this living world fain would be saved from such dissolution, and so it longs to be given objective permanence. Hence, through the ages, man's urge for literary expression.

In judging of literature two things have to be considered. First, how much of the universe the author's heart has been able to capture; and second, to how much of what he has thus gained the author has contrived to give abiding expression. Where both these aims are harmoniously attained, the result is more than good. But these two do not always achieve success together.

The wider the range of the literary artist's sensibility, the deeper the satisfaction he gives us, the vaster the world of man he helps to create as an ageless play-ground for all mankind. But skill in creative expression is also all important for literature. Even if the thing expressed be trivial, it does not follow that the art involved in its expression is also trivial; on the contrary, it remains as an acquisition to the language, cumulatively enhancing man's power of expression. To successful writers, accordingly, men pay their debt of homage by investing them with fame.

The question, therefore, becomes: How may outward expression be given to the world which the emotions of man create within him—an expression that must naturally be such as to preserve in itself these same emotions? For this it is necessary that language should take recourse to adornment.

The clothing of man, when engaged in his business, is simple; the simpler, the better it can be adapted to his purpose. Woman, on the other hand, in all civilised societies, has her finery and ornaments, her airs and graces, her numberless superfluities. For woman's business is concerned with the heart. She has to attract others' hearts, to bestow her own. This cannot be effectively done if she reduces her self-expression to its lowest terms. Man may appear just as he is: woman must make herself lovely. It is better for man, as a rule, to be frank and straightforward; woman cannot do without her reticences, her concealments, her suggestiveness.

Likewise must literature, in order to gain its object, put on ornaments—rhythm, simile, euphony; and avail of intimations and suggestions. Its language cannot, like the language of science and philosophy, afford to make a virtue of parsimony. For the expression of the formless through form, however, the utterance should leave room for the ineffable, which is in literature what grace and modesty are in women. It is incapable of attainment by imitation. It should not be overshadowed by the ornaments, but must be allowed to manifest itself through and beyond them.

In order to give scope to the unutterable within that which is uttered, language has to supplement the meaning of the words mainly with two other means of expression: pictures and music.

That which cannot be said in words may be told in pictures. There is no end of such picture-making in literature. Simile, metaphor, allegory,—all these are requisitioned to give pictorial form to the feelings that seek expression. Consider this line of Balaramdas: "The birds which are mine eyes hie to have sight of thee!" Is there anything here left untold? The yearning of the eyes could not have been put into mere words. It is only when they are pictured as birds in swift-winged flight that the agony of straggling expression is at once appeased.

The aid of music is as often invoked in literature by means of rhythmic and melodious arrangement of language. Where the words fail, this music takes up the burden: it makes the words poignant; meanings which, on a bare analysis, might seem but homely, are wafted to sublimity.

Thus of literature picture and music are the chief ingredients. Picture gives form to idea, music gives it movement. The picture is the body, the music is its life.

But man's heart is not the only thing that looks to literature for a permanent habitation. Man's nature is also a creation that cannot be directly apprehended by the senses, as is material nature. It does not keep still at man's bidding: of supreme interest for man though it be, there is no easy way of putting it on exhibition like a caged animal.

So literature further takes it on itself to project this variously elusive human nature from its place within, into lasting objective form. This is, indeed, a task of immense difficulty, for human nature is neither constant nor consistent: it is divided within itself, and is moreover comprised of many layers. Its deeper recesses are shy of intrusion. Its play is so subtle, so sudden,

that it defies analysis. So that, even to comprehend the whole of it within the heart, is given only to men of genius. Our Vyasas, our Valmikis, our Kalidases have been doing this for us.

Now we may sum up in a word what there is to be said. Literature is concerned with man's emotions and man's character. But no, the last does not need separate mention. Rather should we say that the forms which both human nature and nature outside man are taking within man's heart, the tunes they are there singing,—the permanent reproduction of these in language is the function of literature. Literature would play to us over again the melodies breathed by the universe through the flute of our being.

Literature does not belong to any one in particular, not even to the author himself. It is a divine inspiration—divine because the poet marvels at his own production. As the outside world persistently works to manifest itself through its good and bad, its gains and imperfections, so also does this inspiration strive in every country, every age, every language, to find its way through [our hearts into outside forms of everlasting joy.



## **TO A BUDDHA**

*By* E. H. d'Alvis

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes :

I too might grow, beneath that gaze of thine,  
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise,

Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine  
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes

Unsandalled, bearing perfumed offerings,  
While down the avenues of time still flows  
The splendid pageant of all timeless things.

Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy,

Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain :  
Love and its futile dream shall trouble me

Too briefly—I shall find myself again ;  
And look on thee unpassioned, mute, alone,  
An agelessness invincible in stone.

## NOTES ON ORNAMENTAL ART:

By Nandalal Bose

What I understand by "ornamental work" includes such as: ornaments, carpets, *alpana* (floor decoration), embroidery, illumination, etc.; in short, where arrangement is the main feature.

These notes are merely suggestive, and might help a student to work better: in no case do they claim to teach one how to create.

By observing the various forms and movements in nature, I am pointing out the main features in a concise form.

Ornamental form has two aspects: one, the outward limitation of form, the other, its inward division (A & B).

The outward limitation of every form has its own particular inward movements (C). An artist, if he likes, can take the outward limitation from one form, and the inward division of the other, and combine the two (D).

These forms and movements being reduced to types have lost their variety. Anybody wishing to do new ornamental work will have to observe nature afresh for variety.

By the help of these abstract forms and movements, however, it will be easier to create and to understand the different types of ornamental work; the complexity in nature will be simplified and made clearer if one sees nature through such abstract forms.

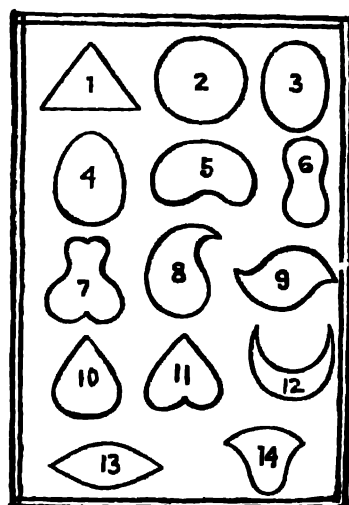
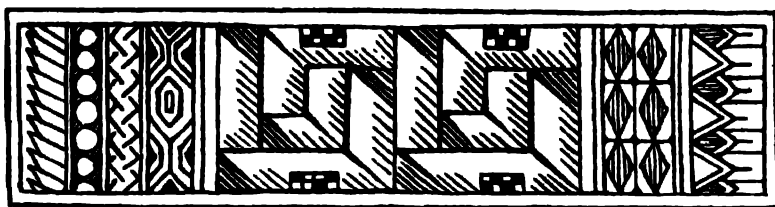
The abstract forms of a betel leaf and a peepul leaf are almost the same, though each has its own peculiarity (E). The artist discovers clues to originality in such subtle distinctions. Otherwise too much concentration on mere types would make his work too intellectual and dry.

Here I am speaking mainly about form and movement and the gradation of light and shade, excluding colour. As colour has got an emotional value, we keep it for the next occasion to discuss.

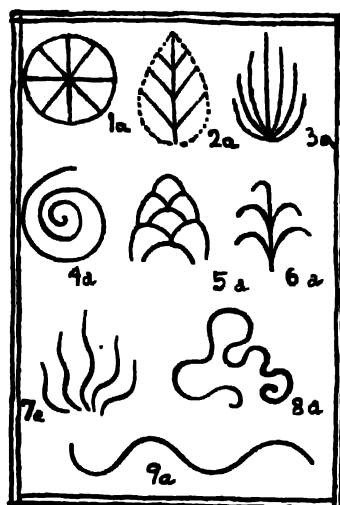
Though ornamental work is mainly concerned with form and movement, there are two more factors to be considered: pause and balance.

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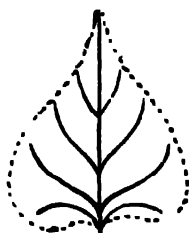
1. This is the first of a series on the same subject by the same author, written for The



A



B



C



D



D



D



D







Spacing



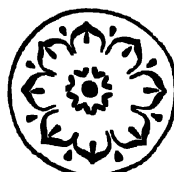
Light & shade



Modulation of movement



G



A2 x B1a



A5 x B6a



A8 x B9a



B9a x 4a



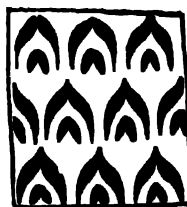
A3 x 4a



A10 x B2a



A14 x B3a



B5a



Pause includes spacing, light and shade, and modulation of movement (F). Without pause the ornamental work appears clumsy and monotonous. Sometimes the pause is replaced by space or it is made more distinct by modulation, i.e. making the movement either slow or rapid; and sometimes the pause itself is brought about by different variations of depth in light and shade.

The other factor, balance, can be attained easily by symmetry of form and the repetition of movement. Spacing, light and shade, and the modulation of movement are useful in regular as well as in irregular design. But balance is the soul of irregular design (G).

In ornamental work if one can find the outward limitation of form then he can begin with the inward division. If the outward limitation is either missing or cannot be found then the artist can begin from the inward division and then proceed to adjust it to its outward limitation and thus make the work complete.

The ornamental design, as compared with nature, is far more simple and abstract. The character of the material should not be overlooked when doing ornamental work. Because the peculiarities of the material limit the artist's originality and give its appropriate quality to the work.

Here it is necessary to add another word. When doing ornamental work an artist's mind should always be alert as to the primary quality of the object that has inspired him; nor be led astray by his bias for its subsidiary characteristics.

## THE SANTINIKETAN SCHOOL OF ART

*By Benode Mukherjee*

What is known as the Neo-Bengal or Tagore School of Modern Art<sup>1</sup> has undergone considerable change in the course of the last few years. This change is so directly related to Rabindranath's Institution at Santiniketan, in particular to the Arts Section of that Institution, that it is not possible to discuss the Art of Modern Bengal today without constantly referring to that centre of art-activity.

This new change, however, for which Santiniketan is to be held chiefly responsible, has not been either arbitrary or eccentric. It is, itself, to be traced to the earliest tradition of the Renaissance Movement in Indian Art, and has therefore to be understood in relation to that tradition.

Broadly speaking, it might be maintained that while the earlier group of artists led by Abanindranath Tagore looked for their inspiration chiefly to Mythology, History and ancient and contemporary literature, the impulses to the later group of artists have come from a different source.

The modern art movement in India may be said to have been inaugurated by the late E. B. Havell. Although this movement was intended to be primarily aesthetic, it could not help being nationalistic, in as much as a conscious and deliberate attempt had to be made to revivify Indian tradition. It was through the writings of that great Englishman that we were made aware of the vast significance of the Indian art and its ideal. And although Havell's own ideal of art got mixed up with the new vision he held up before Indians, the valuable service he rendered in releasing the art of our country from its caves and its museums was such that no Indian artist can be too grateful to him. But Havell, in explaining the ideal and the aesthetic enjoyment of this art, had necessarily to take the help of Indian religion and literature. It was this

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<sup>1</sup> In using this terminology I do not mean to imply the superiority of any particular province or personality. I merely use a name which is convenient because current among artists since the time of Havell.



Pl V

By Abanindranath Tagore



necessity—ideological rather than aesthetic—that explains the influence of literature on the pioneer group of our artists.

The pioneer genius who gave form, shape and character to this new ideal was Abanindranath Tagore. Even before Abanindranath came under the influence of Havell's guidance, his mind had been nourished in the atmosphere of the literary renaissance which had already swept over Bengal. In fact, the lyrical element in his art is to be traced to this influence. It was Abanindranath who first created the taste for our Indian Art. But, although undoubted master of its technique, he created through art what he felt through literature; so that the new art came to have a definite bias. This sort of interpretation of the ideal came in later times to stand as an obstacle. To Indians the ideal appeared as a mystic one. And the appeal to the past that it implied evoked an emotional response in them in which the aesthetic significance of the art (which Abanindranath had successfully cherished in his own art) was likely to be lost. In any case it was dangerous to attach art to a movement that was, in its nature, popular. Those were the days of the Swadeshi Movement when a definite patriotic complex was created in the minds of the people so that everything that could be called genuinely *Indian* came to possess a psychological value, not necessarily proportionate to its aesthetic significance. The movement launched by Havell and Abanindranath was easily carried along to success on the waves of this patriotic fervour. If we go through the discussions which the protagonists and critics of this art-revival had at that time, we can learn in what light this new movement was welcomed.

But there is no doubt that the exuberance of this Swadeshi Movement distorted the ideal with which Havell and Abanindranath had started. The ideal that was safe in the hands of a great genius like Abanindranath, when it passed to the hands of his followers and imitators, ceased to be aesthetic and became narrowly nationalistic. What began as a source of inspiration soon grew to be a worked-up complex that came in the way of any further progress of the Art. Even today we still hear the cry of some Bengali artists to make art properly national.

But Abanindranath's own genius had never ceased to be lyrical and individual. And to some of his pupils at least were transmitted the true impulses of that art. And Rabindranath Tagore, whose genius, more than anything else, had supplied the chief impulse and direction to the entire cultural renaissance of

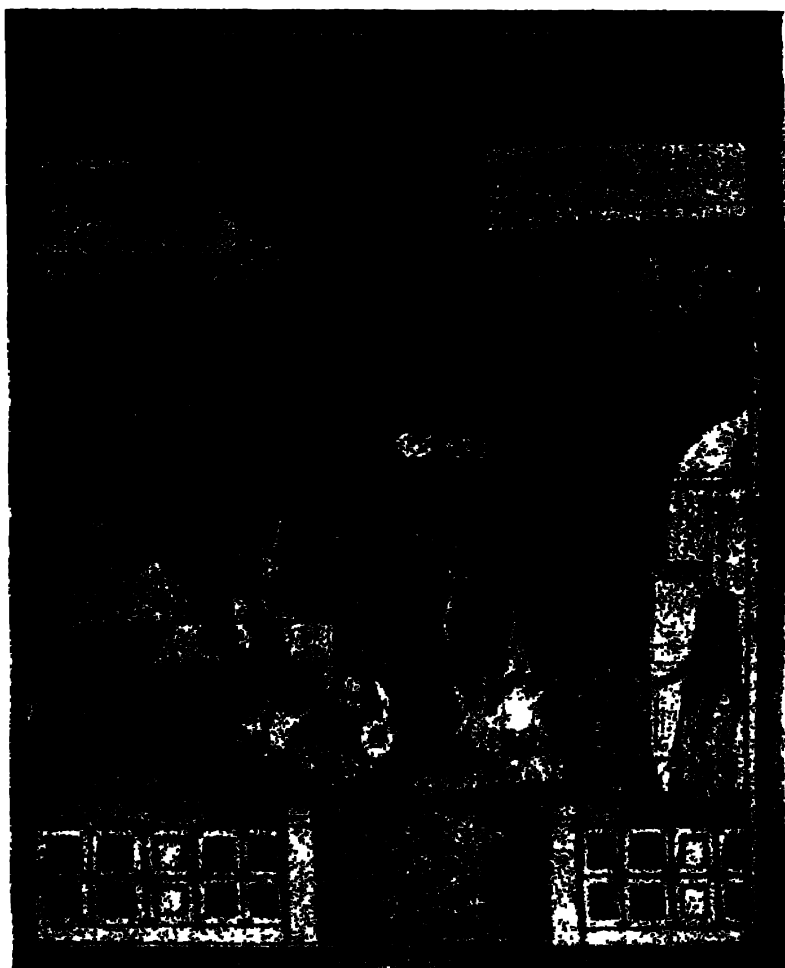
Bengal, kept on insisting that art, before everything else, should be *true*. He emphasised its cultural and educational value; and to provide for such scope he started the Kala-Bhavan (Art School) at Santiniketan, to be run under the guidance of Nandalal Bose and Asit Kumar Haldar. (The latter soon after left.)

Nandalal was, of course, Abanindranath's student and still worked under the influence of the latter's genius. But, fortunately, those few students who came under his charge had had no previous academic or traditional education. This freedom from trained bias, combined with the influence of the personality of the great Poet and the atmosphere of the place, brought them into an intimacy with Nature which was henceforth to be the moulding influence on this group of artists. Not literary tradition but life and nature supplied the theme and the motive force. This change, happily, did not come as a morbid reaction against the older school of art, for Nandalal himself was responding to it and was therefore in a mood and in a position to direct it.

In this new atmosphere, in direct contact with nature, the art of this school began to grow rapidly. It was freed from the spell of literature and brought in the midst of life. And as this new experience demanded new material for its expression, changes had to be made in the old technique.

Till this time the technique of our artists was the one they had taken from Abanindranath who had evolved it for himself. Abanindranath had begun his training under European artists. Later on Havell brought him in touch with the Indian ideal of art and, in particular, the Moghul form of it. It was chiefly under the influence of the Moghul technique on his European training that his first style was developed (see Pl. VIII). Later, again, under the influence of the Japanese art, he adopted certain of the mannerisms of that art, which were particularly suited to his genius. This style evolved into the one that we now know as characteristically Abanindranathian (see Pl. IX).

It was this style that was at first taken up by the Kala-Bhavan students, for it came to them naturally through Nandalal who had been trained in it. But it could not stay as a permanent influence because Nandalal himself had never been finally confirmed in it, his individual genius having taken a somewhat different bias (see Pl. X). Mythology had been the dominating influence on his imagination in his early age; and this naturally made him susceptible to the fascination of the traditional Indian



Pl IX

By Abanindranath Tagore





art, particularly, sculpture. This influence has not only been the most effective in his work, but also the most lasting. It is clearly marked in his creations, much more so than in those of Abanindranath; for this reason, that whilst to the latter it came as a later influence, on Nandalal it had grown as the earliest, and therefore the most potent, influence. Moreover, Nandalal came of a class to which tradition had always been more real than the classics.

It was under these conditions that the new school of art at Santiniketan began its adventurous career. Through Nandalal the students inherited Abanindranath's technique, though in a form so liberal that it left them free to continue experiments with style. And since art at Santiniketan was fostered by Rabindranath not as a national activity which carried patriotic value but as an educational and cultural necessity for the complete individual, opportunity was provided to the artists of the study and understanding of the European and other schools of art and their modern developments; in particular, the admirable analyses of those schools of art by modern European critics. Such comparative study has a natural result of broadening the student's intellectual outlook. This, of course, does not mean that the artists began to look for inspiration abroad; it only means that they were freed from forced fidelity to any particular charmed ideal. The individual was free to choose and accept for himself what ideal suited his genius and his temperament best. This freedom of experiment was generously encouraged by Nandalal in his students; in fact, it has been a consistent principle in his practice of education to leave the individuality of his student as free as possible.

It was no doubt inevitable that such practice should lead to several combinations of styles, not always happy. But there is no need to lament that this irresponsible freedom has destroyed the purity of the national ideal in art; because this purity was not lost without a compensatory gain in strength, even if it be the strength of ruggedness. Nor has this experimenting been meaningless, for a new and definite trend is discoverable in this group of artists, which has little kinship with either the old or contemporary traditions—Ajanta, Moghul or Rajput. At this time it is not possible to discuss this new trend of thought, though it is necessary to say something more as to how this change occurred.

Nandalal came to Santiniketan with a mind well equipped with knowledge of the Indian Classical Art. And although his inspira-

tion remained his own, his ideal has never ceased to be the old Indian conception of form. When the younger group of Kala-Bhavan artists were struggling to find their way and took hold of anything they came against, Nandalal's conception of form stood before them as an ideal. And whilst they strove to free themselves of one tradition, namely that of art moulded under literary influence, they found it necessary to take stand on another tradition, which was near at hand in the training of Nandalal. The conception of the Indian traditional and classical art, which they began to appreciate through the new education, made their understanding of Egyptian, Chinese, and Persian Arts easy.

But the real influence on Nandalal Bose himself has come from a different source. When an artist begins to give form to his experience he discovers that the material on which he has to work is both the way of his work and the obstacle to its perfect freedom. He has, therefore, perforce to some extent, to accept the limitations of his material. But there is an ideal of art which consciously strives to *overcome* this obstacle. There is, however, another ideal of art which *consciously accepts* the limitations of the material and its possibilities. This second ideal may be said to be generally true of decorative art. And as Nandalal's art has marked decorative tendencies, he has evolved a regular discipline for this ideal of adaptation.

Painting was, hitherto, more or less, the only medium of expression for the artists of Bengal. Training under Nandalal Bose, however, roused a desire in his students to experiment with other mediums, and discover the proper material for the genius of each; with the result that today artists at Santiniketan find many types of expression open to them and their diverse talents have not to be forced through the same medium. It is not necessary to deal with this point in detail in this paper.

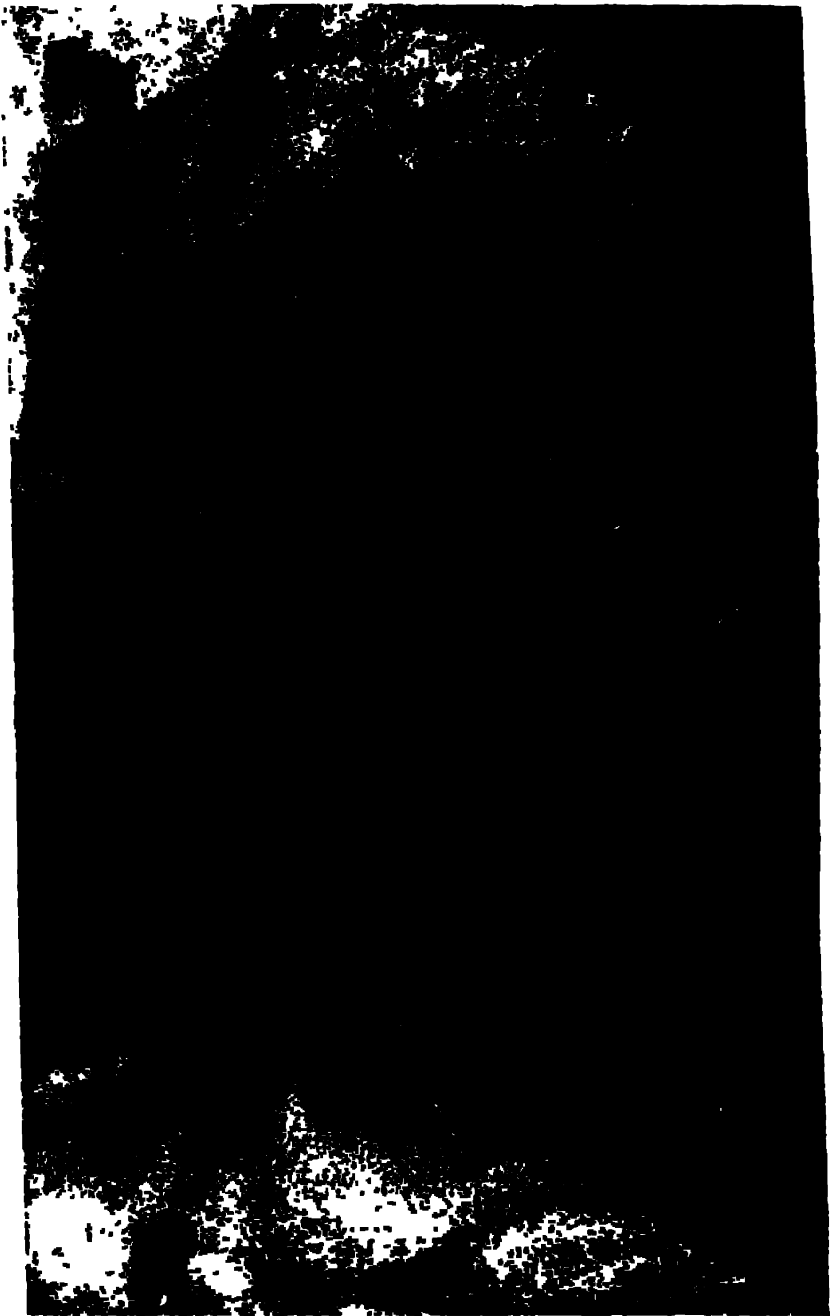
If we critically study the work of our younger artists we shall find that along with that of Abanindranath, the Moghul influence is definitely on the decline with them, whilst the Chinese, Persian, etc. elements are discovering themselves more and more. We seem to be going away from the Bengal school, although at the same time becoming more oriental. The same mentality is at work which makes modern European works seem Oriental. But the greatest single influence responsible for this change is the discipline of decorative art. For this, as for several other things, Nandalal and his students have reason to be grateful to Santiniketan. For



Pl X.

By Nandalal Bose





Pl. XI

By Nandalal Bose



it is Santiniketan, with its ceremonies, its seasonal festivals and periodic dramatic performances, that has provided the necessary scope for this side of his genius. Here art is sustained not only for its own sake but also as part of the social life, a fact which has proved particularly stimulating to a temperament like that of Nandalal's.

In this respect, Abanindranath was less fortunate in his surroundings, although he it was who first realised the value of art-activity in social life. His is the first book in Bengali on *Alpanas* (floor-decorations). He was also the first great mind to perceive the significance of dolls and toys and such other humble objects of folk-fancy and common delight. He has always insisted that people should decorate their daily lives by simple indigenous folk-arts and not employ professional artists to "fancy" for them. But he himself could not get sufficient scope for this activity, although in this respect, as in the respect of Indian art in general, he deserves the credit of having first created the taste for it. It was left to his great disciple to justify the faith of his master.

From this brief survey it will be clear that the influence of Nature at Santiniketan, the guidance of Nandalal which left each student free to pursue the particular bent of his talent while providing him with a variety of mediums, and the ideal of Form that he held out before them, were the chief factors in creating the new departure in the art of modern Bengal, which is associated with the name of Santiniketan. It cannot be said that it was the personality of Nandalal Bose alone which has worked this change, although that personality has undoubtedly meant much. Santiniketan itself has contributed the opportunity and the atmosphere. And, above all, the subtle, indefinable influence of the creator of Santiniketan—Rabindranath—may not be overlooked.



## A NOTABLE BOOK ON HINDUSTHANI MUSIC

By Hemendra Lal Roy

*A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan* (pp. 117) was printed at the Baptist Mission Press, Circular Road, Calcutta, in 1834.<sup>1</sup> It was written by Captain N. Augustus Willard, who, it appears from the title-page, was an officer commanding in the "Service of H. H. the Nawab of Banda." More about him we do not know. This is the earliest systematic treatise on Hindusthani music and is delightful reading even after the lapse of a century. The data were collected largely from professional musicians. Capt. Willard says in the Preface: "I have not confined myself to the details in books, but have also consulted the most famous performers, both Hindoos and Moosulmans, the first Veenkars in India, the more expert musicians of Lukhnow." As this is the first recorded and systematised statement of information received from musicians, eminent research scholars in music, like the late Mr. K. Banerjee of Bengal and Mr. V. N. Bhatkhande of Bombay, have drawn both inspiration and material from this source. (This book, however, does not find mention in the bibliographies supplied by Mr. Fox Strangways and Rev. Popley in their books on Indian music.)

The great merit of the book, as it seems to an Indian musician, lies in the fact that the approach to the subject of Hindusthani music chosen by Capt. Willard was Indian and, as such, intelligible to Indians. This view-point was all along kept up in the book, though the range of treatment was by no means narrow and restricted, as may be seen from the author's summary of the contents:—"The similarity of the music of Egypt and Greece to that of this country has been traced and pointed out; harmony and melody have been compared; and time noticed. The varieties of song have been enumerated, and the character of each detailed; a brief account of the principal musicians super-added, and the work concluded with a short alphabetical glossary of the most useful musical terms."

<sup>1</sup> The Visva-Bharati Library possesses a copy of this rare book.

The author seems to have been a cultured, well-read man, thoroughly at home in Hindusthani; and, judging from his treatment of the technical portion of the subject, had stayed long in India and taken pains to discuss and understand the details supplied by the musicians. In this short notice of the book—a book long out of print—it is neither possible nor profitable to launch into a technical discussion. It may suffice here to present a few principal trends of thought which may be of general interest.

First it is asked: Who is entitled to have an authoritative say on matters musical? The scholar or the musician? Capt. Willard sides with the latter and says: "When from the theory of music, a defection took place of its practice, and men of learning confined themselves exclusively to the former, while the latter branch was abandoned entirely to the illiterate, all attempts to elucidate music from rules laid down in books, a science incapable of explanation by mere words, became idle. This is the reason why even so able and eminent an orientalist as Sir William Jones has failed. Sir William Jones, it seems, confined his search to that phoenix, a learned Pundit, who might likewise be a musician; but I believe such a person does not exist in Hindoostan." Capt. Willard was wise in siding with the musicians in this pundit-professional controversy but the remarks were uncharitable where Sir William Jones was concerned, for the latter did try to have his conclusions verified by professionals. A casual glance at his article *On the Musical Modes of the Hindus*, written in 1784, will convince anybody of the earnest search after truth by Sir W. Jones from pundits and professionals alike. This much, however, might be surmised that Sir W. Jones had not sufficient leisure to devote to the subject.

It is evident, on the other hand, from the writings of Capt. Willard that he had no means of checking the data collected from professionals, in the light of the Sanskrit treatises on the subject. He discusses notes, scales, time-measures, the *ragas* and their classification, and the various types of composition. We find that though the professional equipment of technical terms was not inconsiderable, the meanings and spellings in certain places were corrupt. But this is in some respects to our advantage. We get almost intact the lore of musical knowledge existing among the professionals in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. We can see the musicians formed a good working hypothesis out of

the fragments they gleaned from Sanskrit texts and we, who may read the treatises today, find very little to add, and vainly search for Sanskrit equivalents for some Hindi technical terms in use among musicians. Nevertheless, much labour still awaits the scholar who would master music on its theoretical side. Past theory lags painfully behind present-day practice of Hindusthani music and the theory of music suffers in India from big gaps which prevent these fragments from being unified and co-ordinated into a single whole.

Capt. Willard's admiration of the Hindusthani system is expressed in many places. Referring to those who fail to see any beauty in Hindusthani music, he says: "If by Hindoostanee music is meant that medley of confusion and noise which consists of drums of different sorts, and perhaps a fife—if the assertion be made by such as have heard these only, I admit the assertion in its full extent; but if it be so asserted of all Hindoostanee music, or of all the beauties which it possesses or is susceptible of, I deny the charge. The prepossession might arise from one or more of the following causes; first, ignorance, in which I include the not having had opportunities of hearing the best performers. Secondly, natural prepossession against Hindoostani music. Thirdly, inattention to its beauties from the second motive or otherwise. Fourthly, incapacity of comprehension. It is probably not infrequent that all these causes concur to produce the effect."

In discussing melody and harmony it is remarkable how singularly free he was from the bias that harmonic music is essentially and absolutely superior to the melodic variety. He speaks a good deal in favour of melody, though he remarks once: "There is no doubt that harmony is a refinement on melody." Such judgments were not unusual in 1834 and might have been excused then; but they sound too odd and out of place when one finds Mr. Tovey, a reputed music critic, writing under *Music* in the 14th edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Moreover, folk-music, together with the present music of barbarous races and Oriental civilizations, can give us materials such as anthropology uses in reconstructing the past from its vestiges in the present. . . . When we trace the slow and difficult evolution of our harmonic system we cease to wonder that it was not evolved sooner and elsewhere, and we learn to revere the miracle that it was evolved at all." Those who pass judgments so glibly on Hindusthani music ought at least to know that Hindusthani music has never remained stationary at

any period of its history and the anthropologist will have to tackle a very complex music before he consigns it to prehistoric ages. It is not good logic to say that because melody has remained melody and has developed richer and more complex varieties instead of becoming harmony, it must needs be inferior to harmony. The truth is that there is no inevitability in melody for its developing into harmony and the present so-called European melody is leagues away from melody in the oriental sense. Harmony took an entirely different direction in evolving, but for that reason nobody denies its worth or beauty.

Then we pass on to a discussion "Of the peculiarities of manners and customs in Hindoostan to which allusions are made in their songs." Capt. Willard says: "In Hindoostan the fair sex are the first to woo, and the man yields after much courting. In compositions of this country, therefore, love and desire, hope and despair, and in short every demonstration of the tender passion, is first felt in the female bosom, and evinced by her pathetic exclamations."<sup>1</sup>

In the last chapter the author deplors the decline of music and attributes it to the progress of the theory being arrested after the Hindu period. The practice, however, continued until the time of Muhammad Shah and contributed to the entertainment of nobles and princes.

The fact may be correct; but the conclusion supposed to be based on them: that there was a natural connection between the conditions prevailing in the Hindu period of Indian history and the progress of music and a corresponding antipathy between those prevailing in the Moslem period and that progress, is one which need not be accepted. In fact, whether there is any necessary relationship between the development of any art and a particular set of social and political environments is a question that still baffles, and will probably continue to baffle, all students of sociology.

<sup>1</sup> In so far as this assertion has any truth at all, it should be confined to symbolic poetry, inspired by the idylls of Sri Krishna—Ed.

## THE INTELLECTUAL

*By K. R. Kripalani*

There are among young men today many who will relish no compliment so much as being called "intellectuals". This particular susceptibility may be due partly to this "pose" having become a fashion, and partly because very few have any clear idea of what it means, being an intellectual.

In discussing the nature of a real intellectual, we need not let our enquiry be distorted by reflections on long, unkempt hair, or shabby garments, or shabby habits in general. Every pose must have its masquerade. An intellectual may or may not look "shabby"; just as a saint may or may not look "pitiful", or a poet may or may not look "far away". But that is by the way.

To begin with, it will do intellectuals good to remember that an intellectual, even a genuine intellectual, may not necessarily command a better or a sharper intellect than those who do not aspire to achieve that distinction. For an intellectual is not necessarily one who has a finer intellect than others but one who, whatever his cerebral equipment, believes in it alone and aims at living through it, repudiating more or less the validity of the rest of the make-up of his being. A Newton or an Einstein may command an amazingly curious and accurate intellect but if he restricts its use to the investigation of physical or any other phenomena, and is content *not* to relate its operations there to the basis of his everyday faith, thought, feeling, and activity, he could not be deified or maligned as an intellectual.

Nor is the "intellectual" attitude the same as the "scientific" attitude. It would become so if the scientific analysis of the physical basis of a phenomenon exhausted for us all its value, so that the understanding of an object set the limit to our enjoyment of it. If, whilst understanding the physical cause of the rainbow, I nevertheless let myself go over the wonder of its beauty and was content to accept this joy as a sufficient testimony of its value to me as a human being, I will not have ceased to be "scientific", but I will have swerved from the stern path of a pure intellectual (if such a complete distortion ever exists): for not to enjoy except

through understanding must be his creed. I must ever observe and watch and judge, and, if need be, smile and, perhaps, sneer. For each single phenomenon, observed in isolation, can be reduced to very simple causes, so that nothing is really worthy of our admiration, much less of a complete abandon of our personality to its relish.

A true intellectual is, therefore, an outsider to life and to himself. He breaks the simplicity of his personality and creates a division within himself and so *wills* the mode of his being that an effective imperialism is established within him of his intellect over the rest of his make-up. He does not deny his senses and his desires—in fact, the modern intellectual indulges them a little too aggressively—but he lets them have their way only under the impudent gaze of the imp of intellect, with the result that, although each member of his make-up is indulged and satisfied, he himself is never fulfilled. For fulfilment is a function of the wholeness of our personality.

We love, but there is always the imp in us watching our madness from the outside and winking at our folly, so that we are continually being thwarted in the overflow of our being, and continually being made to feel ashamed of our rapture. Suddenly in the fullness of love's embrace the imp withdraws itself from the blissful lover and whispers: "Fool, mark the gaspings of the heated lungs and the ridiculous gymnastics of these haunches and these buttocks. Some mischievous sperm has made a fool of you." And the overflow of life appears a waste and what might have ended as a pure rapture gives way to a sense of humiliation, mixed with disgust.

We are overtaken by a noble urge and feel a passionate desire to identify ourselves with the wrongs of the common, persecuted humanity, and we stretch our hands, when the whisper comes: "Fool, mark that rabble. Can't you perceive their chattering and their ape-like imbecilities!" We feel like covering our eyes and slinking away—but where?

A genuine intellectual is, therefore, a most pathetic and unenviable phenomenon. He strives to stand on the only foundation that appears sound, and reduces life to one vast *reductio ad absurdum*. Having reduced life to a futility, he cannot get away from his own. He cannot abolish his sensibility: he can only defeat it and so frustrate himself. If life appeared an unredeemed tragedy to him, he might yet die with a sense of sublimity. But he feels in

a state of perpetual bathos. He is too honest to deceive himself and too proud to beg a refuge. He pursues his path until he staggers to its relentless limit where the path is lost in the parched sands of an endless desert. If a last streak of noble sensibility lingers in him, like Turgenev's Nezhdanov, he takes up a pistol and, pointing it against the treacherous and yet beloved brain, pronounces himself "unfit", amid the fatal blaze of gun-powder.



# GANAPATI\*

BY HARIDAS MITRA

## SECTION 6.

As Gaṇeśa was perhaps originally the special deity of the Gaṇas—wild Aryan tribes, inhabiting desert wastes, mountains and forests<sup>1</sup>, he was probably in later times affiliated to *Paśupati* (*Śaṅkara*) and *Bhūlapati* (*Śiva*)<sup>2</sup>; and when he was admitted to the higher Aryan pantheon, various descriptions of his origin were given in the Purāṇas<sup>3</sup>, as necessity arose. These explanations might have taken centuries to grow.

These elements might have been the accretions or accumulations due to organic growth of the conceptions themselves or the explanations of these elements might have been the results of conscious attempts keeping pace with such development. In any case, it is impossible, at this stage, to determine which of these various factors were present and to find out their mutual relationship, as also the exact ways in which they worked.

The mythological accounts in the Purāṇas etc., of Gaṇeśa's origin or birth are extremely confusing. According to the *Līṅga Purāṇa*, he is considered to have been born as a part (*aṁśa*) of Śiva out of *Pārvatī*'s womb. He is also said to have been fashioned by *Pārvatī* herself out of her toilet preparations and bodily impurities according to the *Śiva*, *Matsya*, and *Skanda Purāṇas*, or from a mass of turmeric paste according to *Nāradapañcarātra*. According to the S. Indian version of *Suprabhedāgama*, Gaṇeśa was born of Śiva and *Pārvatī*, who assumed the form of elephants to enjoy themselves, and had thus the face of an elephant. According to *Varāha Purāṇa*, Gaṇeśa sprang into existence from Śiva's

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\* The first five Sections have already appeared in the *First Series* of the *Visva-Bharati Quarterly* (Vol. 8, Part IV, 1931-32).—Editor

1. Compare, also *Gaṇapatyatharva-śr̥ṣam* (*Anandaśram Skt. Series*, Poona).

११०१ ननो नानपतये ननो नचपतये ननः प्रनचपतये ननसोऽसु सन्नोदरायेकदनाव विप्रनामिने  
शिवसुताव चरदमूर्तये ननः

2. These are two appellations of Rudra, actually occurring in *Atharva Veda*. (XI. 2. 1.).

3. For *Paurāṇik* myths about Gaṇeśa's origin, see :—

(a) Gopinatha Rao : *El. Hind. Ic.* under Gaṇeśa,

(b) also, Carucandra Bandyopadhyaya : *Gaṇeśa Thākurer ṭhikujī*.

*Pravāsi*, 1327 B.S. Vol. 20, Part 1, pp. 25 ff.

..... *Pañchastakam* ..... *Candī-Mahāśā-bodhini*,



splendour of countenance, which represents his *ākāśika* portions. As he was too captivating to behold, Pārvatī angrily cursed him to assume an elephant's head and a large belly so that all his beauties might vanish. In the *Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa*, it is stated that Gaṇeśa was originally Kṛṣṇa himself, in the human form.<sup>4</sup> Śani went to see him while a child. The head of the child consequently separated and went away to Goloka. The head of an elephant (Airāvata's young son) in the forest was then removed and engrafted to the body of the child. In *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Ṛgveda*, Gaṇapati is identified, or confused with Brahman, Brahmapaspati or Bṛhaspati who is, of course, the Vedic God of wisdom and is called the sage of sages. According to *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, Gaṇeśa lost a tooth in a fight with Paraśurāma.

The striking intelligence and sagacity of the elephant seem to have acted in a reflex way towards the further growth of the Gaṇeśa story. In the *Śiva Purāṇa*, the account is given of Gaṇeśa's marriage<sup>5</sup> with two fair damsels named Buddhi and Siddhi; or, he is sometimes associated with the *Aṣṭa-Siddhis*. These accounts probably show that Gaṇeśa was simply the lord of wisdom and attainment of desired ends.

The well-known myth of the *Mahābhārata*<sup>6</sup> of Gaṇeśa writing out that epic at Vyāsa's dictation, using his own broken tusk as a stylus, is certainly a later addition. Gaṇeśa had then already attained the position of a scholar like Bṛhaspati among the Gods. Not only that, Gaṇeśa is described as having played on the *mṛdaṅga*<sup>7</sup> in the celestial choir when

4. Gaṇeśa is also found sometimes represented with Viṣṇu's weapons. This seems only to betray an attempt on the part of the Vaiṣṇavas to make a connection with Gaṇeśa who was becoming increasingly popular, with Viṣṇu.

5. At the time of the worship of Durgā, Gaṇeśa is also associated in Bengal, with a *Kālā Rau*—'plantain-tree wife', which is really the *Nava-patrikā*, the nine sacred plants—each of which represents an aspect of the Devi. But in early Bengal sculpture [vide *Catalogue of the Museum of the Varendra Research Society*, (Rajshahi, Bengal, 1919); illustration of Gaṇeśa and Plantain tree in Caṇḍī Image No.  $\frac{D(a)1}{11}$ ]

Gaṇeśa was sometimes represented beside the plantain tree. The drooping and the rustling leaves of the plant and its swaying movement possibly suggested a coy and veiled (Bengalee) girl wife of the plantain species with a pair of *vilba* fruits for her bust. Also, the fondness of the elephant for the fruit and the juicy stem of plantain seems to have again acted in a reflex way, for the growth of the belief and might have, later, led to the transformation.

6. M. Winternitz: *Gaṇeśa in the Mahābhārata*. JRAS, 1898.

7. The *Mṛdaṅgika*-s or the players on the *Mṛdaṅga*, hold Gaṇeśa in special veneration. Sometimes, the experts among of them mutter the technical terms of the *Tāla*-s, as they play on the *mṛdaṅga* and also dance in unison.

Compare the following śloka in *Saddhīva-prokṭa Gaṇeśaśajaka*

सुरमईनचष्टिकादिनाहमुपुरकनैः

बह्वतामनाहमिदहावनानुवचतः ।

विमिश्रितलोकोक्तोक्तवेदिवेदिवन्द्यो

विनायकः ब्रह्माहविचारयो प्रवृत्तवि ॥

Gaṇeśa may be looked upon as the guardian deity of all musicians who play upon skinned instruments—the *śaddhīva*—



MAHA GANAPATI (From Behni )

British Museum



Mahādeva danced in an ecstasy of joy before Viṣṇu, and when Gaṅgā was born. Gaṇeśa had then simply and absolutely become the male prototype, and the counterpart or reflexion of Sarasvatī—the consort of Brahmaṇ, and the presiding Deity of Indian liberal Arts and Sciences.

Gaṇeśa and all his *gaṇas* were regarded as Brahmacāriṇs originally, in keeping with their character as followers of Lord Śiva who was a *yogin* and a *brahmacāriṇ*. Many of these *gaṇas* had, like Gaṇeśa, animal heads or deformed bodies, while others practised severe penances. Many of these *gaṇas* closely approximated to Lord Śiva, in appearance and modes of life, thus attaining *sārūpya-siddhi*; and seemed to have represented different aspects of Lord Śiva. Thus Nandin, as the name implies, probably represented Lord Śiva's aspect of blissfulness and auspiciousness (*ānanda-mūrti* and *maṅgala-svarūpa*). While the skeleton Bhṛṅgin showed Lord Śiva's aspect as penance-maker *mahāyogin*; and Mahākūla stood for Lord Śiva's destructive power, *saṃhāraśakti*.

The attempt on the part of the Brāhmaṇists and the Buddhists to associate Gaṇeśa with a consort or a Śakti<sup>a</sup> must be regarded as later developments.

to show off their skill, the *mṛdaṅga* experts sometimes recite a *dhyāna* of Gaṇeśa and follow it up, with their instruments e.g. the most favourite one among these *dhyānas* is

ॐ आदिं विन्दुवर्धे सर्वाङ्गतिं खलुतमुं नमोऽस्तुते नमोऽस्तुते नमोऽस्तुते—

In contradistinction to and by way of analogy with the musical *tāla*-s associated with Brahmaṇ and Rudra, *Brahma-tāla*, *Rudra-tāla*, we also have, as I gather from some Indian masters of music, similar *paraṇa*-s associated with Gaṇeśa viz. *Kakubha-barana*, *Gata-barana*, and *Ganeśa-barana*.

## NOTES ON LĀLĀ AND PANDITA

By NAGENDRA NARAYAN CHAUDHURI, M.A., Ph.D.

There are some words in Sanskrit which have not yet been satisfactorily explained ; and there is a still larger number of words which have been introduced into Sanskrit from various extraneous sources and the derivations which the Sanskrit lexicographers have attributed to them are very fanciful and far-fetched. Two of such I am tempted to record below with suitable derivatives, appropriate to their meanings.

1. *lālā* (saliva), Bengali, *nāl* or *lāl*—This is not a genuine Sanskrit word and is not traceable in the Vedic speech. This word occurs in later classical Sanskrit. There can be no doubt that it has come from the Dravidian word *nālūka*. In Telugu *nālūka* means tongue.

2. *pañḍita* (wise, learned, a learned man, a scholar)—Sanskrit lexicographers derive it from *pañḍā* (wisdom, knowledge) and *ilac* (a suffix). *pañḍā* as a word to signify 'wisdom' or 'knowledge' was unknown not only in the Vedic speech, but also in very old classical Sanskrit. It seems to be derived from the Tamil root *paṇḍu*, the meaning of which is 'to be accomplished, ancient, old, to be ripe, etc.' In Sanskrit a learned man is also called *vṛddha* and the *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya where we find a chapter on *Vṛddha-Saṃyoga*, meaning 'Association with the learned', bears testimony to it. The word *pañḍita* is deeply rooted in Sanskrit and is *a priori* unlikely to have been borrowed from the Dravidian language ; and yet it can hardly be doubted, I think, that its origin is Dravidian. Because there are not only the direct descendants of the root *paṇḍu* more numerous in the Dravidian language than in Sanskrit, but collateral words of the same significance are also very abundant, whereas in Sanskrit no correlative root is available. The derivation of the word *pañḍā* from the Dravidian root *paṇḍu* is, therefore, much more natural than that which Sanskrit lexicographers have devised : cf. *pāṇḍā*, *pāṇḍe*, *pāḍe*, *pāḍ*.

## NOTES

### RABINDRANATH APPEALS TO GANDHIJI.

In a celebrated rejoinder to Rabindranath Tagore's plea that the human mind, even the most ordinary, feels the need of transcending the merely "utilitarian" and of feeling the beautiful at some moments of its being—which need must not therefore be neglected—Gandhiji rebuked the Poet for living for the morrow and presenting to his country's gaze "the beautiful picture of birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky"; for he (Gandhiji) had had "the pain of watching those who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire." The present need of India is therefore absolutely economic, for "to a people famishing and idle the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages."

Sublime words!—worthy of being made as the gospel of the new India! And the Poet accepted them as such. But he wondered—or might have wondered—how the rebuke applied to him. For he has never advocated that people should sing on empty stomachs, nor that harmonious sounds can perform the function of bread. In fact he had advocated the Arts because they too, along with food (though not in so primary a fashion), satisfy a genuinely *human* need. And on Gandhiji's side, the Poet was justified in questioning that, if food be indeed the "only acceptable form in which God can dare appear" to the masses, why then did Gandhiji advocate so many other things for them which cannot strictly be justified on economic grounds; for example, that man needs to pray, that "spiritual" women should shave their heads, that married couples should not mate, and so on—"telling the beads of negation?" If therefore self-abnegation be a higher need of man, so may also self-expression of a certain kind be a real need.

This question has come to have an added interest because of Gandhiji's proposal to found an All India Village Industries

in this connection, the latter said to him (I was present): "Please tell Mahatmaji that I appeal to him, since he is endeavouring to found a Museum for the nation, not to limit it to crafts as crafts. Crafts have been the media of artists in all ages, and our artists, as painters, as architects, as decorators, have helped our folks to get finer satisfaction out of the same material. The economic life of a nation is not such an isolated fact as Mahatmaji imagines and, today, side by side with economic poverty, we are faced with a cultural poverty which puts us to shame—shame that is in no way lessened when we consider what we once were. Our art treasures today are found in museums outside India, and our village artists are dying out, while the taste of our people is being slowly perverted by foreign fashions, ill-related to our life. Perhaps one day we will have no art treasures left: we will have to go visiting museums in foreign lands to feel pride in our past and pain in our present. Please tell Mahatmaji to consider that art is not a luxury of the well-to-do. The poor man needs it as much and employs it as much in his cottage-building, his pots, his floor-decorations, his clay deities, and in many other ways. If Mahatmaji's men go round collecting specimens of village industries, why may they not also look for and collect specimens of the various indigenous arts spread all over our land and waiting to be re-cherished? A section of the Museum may be devoted to it, which will show us how our peoples have lived and are living, and how in diverse ways, with what material means at their disposal, they have tried to create some *ras* in their life. I would do it myself, but I know only too well that I do not command the resources nor the necessary popular confidence that Mahatmaji commands."

The Poet spoke in a somewhat excited tone. He feels genuinely and acutely on this point. We dare say S. J. Kumarappa carried this message to Mahatmaji. But will he consider?

S. J. Kumarappa may also have communicated to him what Nandalal Bose said on this point. It is not true, the latter said, that artistic activity has no economic consequences. How does Mahatmaji like our people buying pictures of deities (they all buy because they need them) printed in Germany and Japan? And I have seen, he continued, our poorest villagers buying bangles and anklets and necklaces and ear-rings made in Japan because they are fast losing faith in our own. When the poorest

(artists in general) to direct these needs and make them believe once more in the beauty of our native forms?

But will Gandhiji consider?

### Co-operative movement among the Santals.

That the Poet not only *feels* the Santals as an artist (which a preceding poem testifies) but has also felt *for* them as one human being for another, was amply illustrated when on the 16th of April the Santals of three adjoining villages invited him to open their first co-operative stores. It was an interesting sight, the Poet sitting surrounded by the Santals, both men and women (for these simple, healthy folk never learned to "safeguard" their women, in spite of the example of their Aryan and Semitic neighbours), who received him in their own ceremonial fashion. Their *Brati-balakas* (boy scouts organised by Sriniketan) formed lines and saluted and yelled. One of their women came forward, put a garland of fresh flowers round the Poet's neck, annointed his forehead, and presented him with a piece of cloth made by one of them. The Santals, in spite of the centuries of more or less serfdom, carry no trace of servility about them. They carry themselves with an air of independence and a healthy grace which we have always envied. I wonder if they know how much the Poet admires their natural grace.

Then one of the Santals (presumably one of their *intelligent-sia*) read a speech in which he paid a tribute to what the Poet, through the Department at Sriniketan, had done for them. The speech disclosed several interesting facts. Their five villages had been helped to form themselves into a Society which has been carrying on the fourfold programme of Education, Health, Cottage Industries, and Agriculture; with a combined strength of 111 families, making up 570 individuals. He claimed that they had built 996 yards of road and 1102 of drain, and cleared seven *bighas* of jungle and filled up nine pits of stagnant water; with perceptible improvement in their health. They had taken advantage of the educational scheme run by Sriniketan and had their children enrolled as *Brati-balakas*; they had also been helped to cultivate sugar-cane which they found more profitable than paddy. Nineteen members had kitchen gardens of their own, and they had a small poultry house—supplied by Sriniketan, with Chittagong breed. Some of their members had been taught weaving, carpentry, book-binding, etc.



paddy in time of surplus and from which they borrowed in time of need. They were linked to the Visva-Bharati Central Co-operative Bank. It was with the help of that bank that the new Co-operative Stores was being started. It was a long list that he enumerated.

The Poet also spoke a few words. He said that the present scene reminded him, by contrast, of the time when he first started to do work among the Santals who, then, had looked at him and his workers suspiciously and half-hostilely; which was quite natural since if the poor have learnt to dread the *bhadra lok* (the bourgeois) everywhere in the world it was because the latter have always exploited them for their profit. What he particularly appreciated among the Santals was that unlike many other Indians, they never depended on the help of others but relied on themselves and never sold their dignity.

The function ended with a Santal dance. The Santal dance is a fascinating sight. It is the most perfect and the most beautiful representation I have seen of the aggressive, futile, comic male and the passive, self-assured, mocking will of the female. The movements are monotonous, but some monotonies do not seem to pall.

K. R. Kripalani

## REVIEWS

### Dr. P. K. Acharya on Indian Architecture.

Ordinarily research scholars seem to ignore the fact that the past is of interest to us only in so far as it was *living* and that unless they discover it for us in such a way as to make us feel its life, we may admire them for their patience and industry but will not be the wiser for their labours. I have often felt sad that so much human talent and industry should disappear in the publication of matter where bones keep on rattling without forming for us an outline of the figure that once moved. I, therefore, cannot help congratulating Dr. P. K. Acharya of the Allahabad University for his great work *Manasara*. I am not qualified to pronounce judgment on ancient Indian architecture, but I can say this much that the learned author has succeeded in re-fashioning for us, out of the debris of the past, a picture of the forms of ancient architecture which, while it speaks much for his scholarly equipment, has the additional merit of interesting us in a real human way. The indirect glimpses it gives into the life of the people whose architecture he discusses, are something for which his readers will have reason to be grateful to him.

Rabindranath Tagore

### Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India.

By Edward Thompson and G. T. Garratt.

Publishers, Macmillan.

The authors are too well-known to the reading public to need any introduction. Mr. Thompson had, in his earlier days, made a reputation for himself as a fearless and independent critic of the bureaucracy. Of late, no doubt, his outspoken and rather unsympathetic criticism of the leaders of Indian thought has, to some extent, damaged his reputation as a friend of India. But it must be admitted that Thompson's criticism, however unpalatable, has always been honest and sincere, and, undoubtedly, clever.

Mr. Garratt by his earlier book *An Indian Commentary* clearly established his claim to be considered a thoughtful and

impartial student of Indian affairs. His analysis of the economic position of the Indian peasant has rarely been equalled. As a member of the civil service he has had direct and first-hand knowledge of the condition of "the voiceless millions" of this country.

When two such men have joined hands to write a history of modern India, one would expect in it not only patient research, but keen insight and fearless criticism. We acknowledge freely that herein we have not been disappointed. Even a cursory reading of the book under review will satisfy the reader that the learned authors have examined carefully a mass of original evidence, marshalled their facts with great assiduity, and drawn their conclusions in a fair and logical manner. The idea of dividing the book into eight sections on a chronological basis is also very sound, far sounder than the usual one of representing the British period of Indian history as the triumphal march of a succession of Viceroys.

The style of writing is likewise attractive, and, where occasion requires it, trenchant. To the student of history, the rise of British rule in India is one of the most romantic episodes in the annals of the world. The authors have never lost sight of this. "Secondary figures, Indian and English, play a living part in the narrative."

At places, there is a journalistic, but very human, touch in the language employed by the authors, which may not win the approval of the more fastidious reader. But in our opinion this touch does not in any way detract from the merit of the book. For, after all, the work is not one meant exclusively for the shelves of a sombre and learned academic library. I quote below a few lines from the preface to show the spirit in which the learned authors have approached their subject.

"The historian's task has been made difficult by the animosities which have distracted the world during the last twenty years, and by their repercussions, official and unofficial. The mischievous tendency to make historical truth subservient to administrative efficiency has been increased by changes in legal practice and procedure, which operate as an effective censorship" (p. vii). (The censor today would certainly not have passed "The other side of the Medal".)

"By far our hardest task has been to avoid a national or racial bias. We have both had long and close connections with

India, and friendships that have given us a feeling of second nationality; but inevitably our first loyalty is to our own country, one of the last in which free and unregimented thinking is still possible. Yet love of England cannot blind us to the dangers which beset Western civilization, and we are convinced of the immense influence that India, called to reinvigorated existence, could exert in solving those problems which now oppress the mind of man. We send out this book hoping that it will work for that understanding between the two countries which fate has linked so strongly together" (p. viii).

Reading the above lines with the last page of the epilogue (p. 655), it is clear that the book has a definite mission. It aims (1) at telling the whole truth about the history of the British period, and (2) at establishing a better understanding between the natives of India and their rulers. But it is by no means a propagandists' book. Its value as a historical work is very great, and its depth is undoubted in spite of its sparkle.

A glance at the contents will show how systematically the authors have tackled their subject. The gradual development of the administrative machine has been carefully traced from the Foundation and Consolidation of the East India Company in Book I to Bureaucracy on the Defensive in Book VII and Dyarchy in Operation in Book VIII. The necessary dramatic touch to stimulate the imagination and interest of the average reader has been given by such attractive headlines as, Racial Estrangement and Changing Hindu Outlook (Book IV), Parental Administration (Book VI), and Growth of Nationalism (Book VII). In fact the title itself has a dramatic flavour. *Rise* and *Fulfilment* sound very much like the first and fifth acts of a drama. We ourselves do not approve of the word *fulfilment*. It can have no meaning at the present stage of India's history, with everything in the melting pot. The *fulfilment*, let us hope, is yet to come.

We do not like to dwell on the last few chapters of the book, as they deal definitely with current and controversial political topics. We have our own views on Indian nationalism. To many of us it has the sanctity of a creed. The present is not the occasion to set forth either our views or our creed. But to us it appears that the whole talk of constitution-making is futile. The word Constitution is not applicable in the case of India as she is today. From the earliest days of the Company's regime the administrative machinery has undergone periodical alteration to

meet new exigencies as they have arisen. One such period of change is on us today. But any fresh administrative arrangement that Government might think fit to make will only be an arrangement, and nothing more. It cannot be dignified with the name of a Constitution. The learned authors might have made this position clearer. The granting of a constitution is, after all, only an euphemistic way of describing the submission of the autocrat to the will of a united nation, a contingency not likely to arise in India for a long time yet, for the very good reason that the nation itself is as yet in an embryonic stage. The sordid and undignified scramble for jobs that we see around us does not indicate the development of any true national consciousness.

What is remarkable about the book under review is that there is no attempt whatsoever at whitewashing anybody. There is a refreshing candour apparent throughout its pages, which reminds one of the historical writings of the late Colonel Malleon. Nor have the authors been niggardly in bestowing praise even on the enemy where praise is due. We quote a few passages below to illustrate this. Referring to the Plassey period: "A gold lust unequalled since the hysteria that took hold of the Spaniards of Cortes' and Pizzaro's age filled the English mind. Bengal in particular was not to know peace till it had been bled white" (p. 91).

Regarding Clive: "Clive's enormous greed provided an example against which his severity towards others . . . was entirely ineffective. For the monstrous financial immorality of English conduct in India for many a year after this, Clive was largely responsible" (p. 95).

With regard to Nanda Kumar a passage is quoted with approval on p. 139: "The offence which had not barred an Englishman's path to a peerage was now to doom a Hindoo to the gallows." The Englishman was obviously Clive.

To Nawab Mir Qasim, the inveterate enemy of the Company, the following tribute of praise is paid on p. 100: "Mir Qasim was a genuine patriot and an able ruler, who quickly retrenched expenditure and suppressed disorders. But he was to be driven to the edge of insanity, if not over it."

On pp. 206 and 207, there is a remarkably impartial estimate of the character of the notorious Tipoo Sultan.

Nana Farnavis of Poona, another irreconcilable foe of the Company is described as "a man of strict veracity, humane, frugal and charitable" (p. 215).

The following passage on p. 114 is also very frank: "We are today sensitive about the charge that in India we act on the high Roman maxim, *divide et impera*. In the eighteenth century it was statesmanship's normal aim and no one saw any harm in it."

Again on p. 213: "The greatest Indian statesman of the eighteenth century, Nana Farnavis, through perilous decades had kept his nation, the Marathas, from falling under the Company's all-conquering sway. Courteously and without giving offence adequate for war, he had put by numerous invitations to walk into the parlour where Nizam, Nawabs of Oudh, Bengal, the Carnatic, and several smaller rulers were being entertained."

Referring to a later period, this interesting passage appears on p. 282; "The Nizam's contingent was so highly paid that employment in his service, civil or military, was eagerly sought by the officers both of the King's and the Company's army. The Resident was importuned with applications for these comfortable staff appointments, and large sums passed annually into the pockets of our own people. The joyous catchword was, 'Nizzy pays for all'."

There is no attempt at drawing a veil over the disgraceful transactions that passed between the Company and certain treacherous Sikh Sardars before the Sikh wars. "The Sikhs were practically deserted by their commanders, Dal Singh and Tej Singh, who were both in correspondence with the enemy" (p. 371). ". . . annexing Kashmir and selling it to Gulab Singh who had remained neutral to see which way victory would go" (p. 374).

Chilianwala in the second Sikh war is called a "drawn battle" in the present book, though Hunter in his history of India qualified the phrase by saying, "which British patriotism prefers to call a drawn battle." Such little lapses are really negligible. We mention them merely because the writers have set before themselves such a high standard of fairness and veracity.

In this connection we would like to point out one or two passages which in our opinion are not in keeping with the general tone of the book. On p. 309, at the foot of a quotation from Elphinstone, appears the following: "The dog was beginning to walk on his hind legs like a man—remotely; he did not do it well, but he was beginning to do it." The simile is in bad taste. It is not the reviewer's province to refer to a dog's teeth, but why ask for it?

The attitude of the authors towards Bengal and the Bengalis

is rather anomalous. On p. 310, we find very high praise for the Bengali of the nineteenth century. "The Brahmo Samaj today is a dying institution. But for seventy years its influence was all-pervading in every higher walk of Bengali life, and it produced a succession of men for whom the only adequate adjective is 'Noble' . . . Bengali intellectual and spiritual life . . . was a beacon to the rest of India, which Bengal saved by her example, as she was saving herself by her exertions."

But on p. 576, there is this frank chuckle of joy at Bengal's gloomy future: "With the removal of the capital to Delhi and the rapid development of higher education in other provinces, Bengal has lost its old leadership. The War gave unwelcome prominence to the essentially pacific nature of its inhabitants. Even the nationalist movement became centred in the west, and Bengal has contributed little to its development after the War, gaining its chief notoriety by irresponsible political murders. Finally time has had its revenge. The new Bengal under any democratic system will have a small Muslim majority, though its politically conscious classes are almost entirely Hindu. Its future as an autonomous province within a federation is probably more precarious than that of any other part of India."

The only remark we wish to make is that it is not open to a historian to chuckle at anybody's expense. It really does not matter very much if a foreigner does not appreciate the Bengali's "low emotional flash point." After all Messrs. Thompson and Garrat have between them been very much more considerate towards the Bengali than their predecessors in the field of history. Even a fair-minded writer like Malleon could not avoid the temptation of having a fling at the Bengali, whenever he got the chance.

The learned authors have carefully analysed the development of the Anglo-Indian mentality from period to period, and shown how this mentality reacted on the subject population, and ultimately affected the course of events. The whole book must be read to understand this psychological aspect of British Indian History. We shall try to give the reader some idea of it by quoting a few passages selected at random.

"Men like Elphinstone and Munro had envisaged an India in which the British did little more than keep the peace. Leaving the administration in Indian hands, they would have trusted to education to cure such evils as they believed to exist. The next generation of officials was conscious of the clash between two civilisations

one of which they believed to be improving and the other to be in the last stages of degradation." This passage on p. 330 relates to the period of social reform under Bentinck and afterwards.

Thompson's views on the Mutiny are well-known and need not be set forth here. But the following extract from p. 462 is interesting: "Educated Hindus could read the virulent attacks in the European Press on Canning, Grant, and other 'humanity-pretenders' who were endeavouring to restore the rule of law. Muslims heard of the punishment meted out to their co-religionists . . . These things were not done in a corner, and it is absurd to imagine that they did not affect profoundly the millions who had remained passive and had viewed events with the philosophy of a race which has seen many empires pass."

"No educated Indian has ever forgotten the lesson of the Ilbert Bill. They were accustomed to rulers who could be influenced by cajolery, entreaty, bribery or threats of revolt, but it was an entirely new experience to see a Government, and especially the aloof and powerful British Government, deflected from its purpose by newspaper abuse and an exhibition of bad manners" (p. 498).

"Lord Curzon's policy . . . combined with his off-hand methods of expressing his opinions were well suited to bring Moderates and Extremists into the field against the Government" (p. 547).

"The Armistice added to the general exasperation. Victory brought a certain racial arrogance, accentuating the worst features of the British occupation . . . Certain officials who had remained in India during the War seemed to take a delight in being rude to Indians who had done the same . . . political Indians saw in them (Sedition Bills) a direct challenge, not unlike the Partition of Bengal, but providing better grounds for a struggle because it was a challenge which would unite every party and every creed" (p. 650).

We shall now close this lengthy and rather rambling review by recommending the book very strongly to the Indian readers. It is an impartial and critical study of men and events in India during the British period—impartial to an extent unknown before, and critical without any exhibition of pettiness or petulance.



## East and West.

An International Series of Open Letters : Gilbert Murray and  
Rabindranath Tagore. International Institute of  
Intellectual Co-operation—Paris.

This exchange of letters between Prof. Gilbert Murray and Rabindranath Tagore provides a reading that is without question ennobling, even if somewhat sad. It is sad when one reflects how helpless and baffled the thinkers of both East and West are feeling in this modern chaotic world. The civilisation to which intellect has contributed the Aladdin's Lamp of Science seems to be instigating the *jinn* to harass and haunt the peace of the men of intellect themselves. There are no personal complaints in the letters—no decent thinker complains of personal wrong; the complaint is that men should be throwing the fruits of intellect at each other's heads, like stones to break heads with, instead of sharing those fruits to increase the common store of health and happiness. In particular, Nationalism, which the Liberals had reared up in the belief that it was the best guarantee of individual liberty has been turned into a cloak of commercial greed, jealousy and blood-thirstiness.

In a world where international morality is almost non-existent what is going to be the attitude of thinkers and artists—all those who think and those who feel? It was seen, during the World War, writes Prof. Gilbert Murray, that "often the intellectual leaders in the various nations had been not better but, if anything, worse than the common people in the bitterness and injustice of their feelings." Men of intellect may recognise that there are differences between nations, between their habits and attitudes, and these differences are real; but they are vastly exaggerated. And in any case, there is always more in common between man and man than there is to divide man from man. "And it is valuable to remember that, as Plato pointed out long ago, while criminals tend to cheat and fight one another, and stupid people to misunderstand one another, there is a certain germ of mutual sympathy between people of good will or good intelligence. An artist cannot help liking good art, a poet good poetry, a man of science good scientific work, from whatever country it may spring. And that common love of beauty or truth, a spirit indifferent to races and frontiers, ought, among all the political discords and antagonisms of the world to be a steady

well-spring of good understanding, a permanent agency of union and brotherhood.

"There is no need for sentimentality, no need for pretence. If I enjoy the beauty of your poetry, if I sympathise with your rejection of honours from a government which you had ceased to respect, that makes already a sufficient bond between us: there is no need for me to share or pretend to share, or make a great effort to share, your views on every subject, or because I admire certain things that are Indian to turn round and denounce Western Civilization. Men of imagination appreciate what is different from themselves: that is the great power which imagination gives."

These are noble words and their effect is heightened by his continuing to believe in "the healthiness and high moral quality of our poor distressed civilization. It made the most ghastly war in history, but it hated itself for doing so. . . . I still have hope for the future of this tortured and criminal generation: perhaps you have lost hope and perhaps you will prove right. But the divergence of view need make no rift between us."

In fact, there is no divergence of view: the Poet, too, has not lost hope. He answers: "I cannot afford to lose my faith in this inner spirit of Man, nor in the sureness of human progress which following the upward path of struggle and travail is constantly achieving, through cyclic darkness and doubt, its ever-widening ranges of fulfilment." Nor has the Poet lost his faith even in "the future of this tortured and criminal generation": "When I read some of the outstanding modern books published after the War I realise how the brighter spirits of young Europe are now alive to the challenge of our times. Nothing can be of greater joy to us in India than to find how unimpeachably great some of your scholars, historians, artists and literary men are in their fearless advocacy of truth, their passion for righteousness." But unfortunately, "whatever is finest in Europe cannot pass through to reach us in the East." For "the one outstanding visible relationship of Europe with Asia today is that of exploitation. . . . It is physical strength that is most apparent to us in Europe's enormous dominion and commerce, illimitable in its extent and immeasurable in its appetite. Our spirit sickens at it. Everywhere we come against barriers in the way of direct human kinship. . . . There is no people in the whole of Asia today which does not look upon Europe with fear and suspicion."

"But this, as we realize, is only one side, however real and

painful, of the Western civilization as it appears to us in the East." So that it is still possible for him to "aver that in the life of the West they have a large tract where mind is free; whence the circulation of their thought-currents can surround the world."

Reviewing this exchange of generous sentiments and noble assurances, two reflections suggest themselves. First: it is obvious to what a high plane the noblest representatives of different nations have to strain their wings to be able to accept each other for what they are. It is as *Thinkers*, as *Artists*, as *Men of imagination* that they feel they can meet. Therein lies the tragedy of the situation: as simple ordinary men they are bound to peoples whose interests, and therefore whose passions, contradict each other. How far and how long can imagination keep persons together when in actual life they are tied to interests that keep them apart? The English Liberal thinkers, in particular, are identified with a historical tradition which, for all its liberalising influence, has built up the effective machine of modern Imperialism. Now, imaginatively perceived, even Imperialism may appear to have some virtue; but our mortal frames groan under its ruthless wheels and some of us may be excused for heeding the groans of our own people.

Secondly: even if *Men of imagination* realise their mutual kinships so effectively as to forget their less spiritual and more material alliances, that will hardly be sufficient to insure peace in the world. The common peoples of different nations who are more and more gaining power in the State cannot be supposed to be either very intellectual or very imaginative. And yet it is they who can make or unmake peace. If these peoples are to move along a common path of progress and husband a common harvest of civilisation that men of intellect have sown for them, then they must have a common faith, a common creed, and must be linked by common material needs. Mere intellectual appreciation of each other's view-point may have a chastening influence but it is not enough.

Men of imagination who can stretch their hands across the conflict of material interests are few in this world. Their voices will always sound noble but, in a world where Plato's philosophers have yet no power, they are bound to be ineffectual. And, therefore, however much one may sympathise with the activities of the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation and

admire its active spirits like Prof. Gilbert Murray, he would be an irrational optimist who believed that the world-disease is to be healed through them.

K. R. Kripalani

**Ancient India and Indian Civilization.**

By Paul Masson-Oursel, Helena William-Grabowska  
and Philippe Stern.

Published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.,  
London. 21s.

Most works that claim to be histories of ancient India have disappointed those who sought to find in them an understanding of the true spirit of Indian Civilization. Long and interminable narrations of political events may tell us much about a people but not everything; so that we find innumerable judgments have been passed on this land and its peoples ever since European curiosity found a favourable field in ancient India; but comparatively little justice has been done to the India that even in its worst period of subjection has not ceased to create. Because political data are easy to collect and classify, and creative values are difficult to measure, much of Indian truth has been obscured in the name of scientific method.

The authors of the work under notice, therefore, deserve to be congratulated for having redeemed the scientific method of the charge of false ministry, for they have brought to their task this true spirit of enquiry and sympathetic understanding. And appearing as it does, in that famous series of "The History of Civilization", edited by Prof. C. K. Ogden, it bids fair to prove its worth as a standard publication on the subject, written by such competent scholars as M. Paul Masson-Oursel who contributes the section on Political History, Society, Philosophy and Religion; Mme. Helena William-Grabowska, who describes the Literature of Ancient India; and M. Philippe Stern who surveys the Art-expressions: all of whom collaborate in a manner that has preserved the richness of diverse scholarship without injuring the unity of conception. A very thoughtful and illuminating foreword from the pen of Dr. Henri Berr, and a comprehensive, and, therefore, useful bibliography add much to the value of the work.

The book opens with a somewhat recondite description of the

country and its population, in the course of which ethnological beginnings of Indian civilization are traced with appropriate references to their linguistic, anthropological and other allied factors. Naturally the problems presented are too vast to be adequately discussed in a brief space as a book like this can provide. But the writer (of the section under consideration) has condensed them without making himself unintelligible, though there are occasional points which require a little more elucidation. The historical survey which is preceded by a summary of the pre-historic civilizations lately unearthed, takes the reader through the drama of political events, and he reaches the end without any tedium; rather with his memory fully refreshed. The so-called dark period in the pre-Gupta times is left dark though much light has of late been thrown on it by Mr. Jayaswal's thesis on the rise of the Vakatakas during that period. With regard to the campaigns of Alexander in India of which so much capital has been made in previous works, the writer relies not only on the foreign evidences but also on the native sources, and gives a very impartial account.

There are some assertions which the author seems to have accepted either in haste or by bias, for example, that Asoka imbibed from Persia his idea of world-wide kingship; or that the caste system had always existed in its present degenerate form. But they need not detain us.

The economic life of ancient India has been widely discussed; but not adequately related to the social life of the people. It is this superficial analysis, devoid of an integral conception of the whole thing, that might be responsible for the writer's opinion that the wretched economic existence of the immense majority of the Hindus created among them a melancholy pessimism, a hatred of life which explains some forms of thought, specially the so-called ascetic ideal of life. The conclusion is rather hasty, and the data from which it is drawn hardly supported by facts. The intense and continuous activity in every sphere of creative life, as well as the testimonies of foreign visitors including Megasthenes, Fa-Hian and Hiuen Tsang are there to show that the people were always in affluent circumstances. And there were various and adequate safeguards against such untoward calamities as famines, etc. The ascetic turn of the Indian mind has, therefore, to be traced to other origins. We might also bear in mind the remark of an

eminent Indian thinker that a beggar cannot renounce and that man can be averse to pleasure only when he has had a good taste of it.

The writer seems to be at his best when he brilliantly unfolds the spiritual life of ancient India, its religions and philosophies, holding before the reader the vivid picture of the several systems of thought and their influence on religious sects and philosophical schools. The writer has brought to bear on this section, the largest in the book, remarkable insight combined with a masterly command of facts. He believes, and rightly, that religion and philosophy were closely interwoven in the texture of India's spiritual life; and he takes note of almost all the religio-philosophical systems of India, both in their ritualistic and psychic implications. In his opinion, "the lesson which India teaches us is that which she taught herself—that to understand better is to free oneself." The exegesis of the Veda could have been made more up-to-date by including a reference to the latest contribution of Sri Aurobindo in that direction. And the brief notice of India's scientific achievements would have been a little more explicit if mention had been made of the other branches of science, the data of which are available in the *Sukranitīsar* and in other literary sources.

The section on literature, with its delightful summaries of the plots of the epics, plays and stories, describes with remarkable clarity the various literary forms and expressions in different periods of history. We are led through the varied stages of India's literary aspirations, the simple but profoundly suggestive hymns of the Vedas, the beauties of the analytical type of literature represented in its post-Vedic development, the sublimities of the epic poetry, the romantic classicism of the *kavyas* and the dramas, the wonderfully charming story elements of the narrative literature. Except in one or two places the writer is very clear in her views all through. The theory of the Greek inspiration of Indian drama has lost much ground; and the probability of an independent dramatic development in India is gradually gaining support.

The exposition of Indian art has been attempted in a manner that reflects a peculiar amalgam of the Western and Indian ways of art-interpretation. The author has followed his native genius without being indifferent to the idealism of Indian art whose appeal he has at times found too irresistible. The discussion of

the so-called Greco-Buddhist art, and its influence on the original art of India is well done, though a little too lengthy for the book. The recently unearthed antiquities at Hodda in the north-western region of India have been characterised as the second phase of the Greco-Buddhist art. The remarks about the foreign origins of certain forms of early Indian art need not be accepted as the last word on the subject. In the absence of any particular relic in Bactria which is held to have transmitted Perso-Hellenic art to India, it would be gratuitous to assume that the Asokan pillar is a foreign adaptation. The so-called Greek origin of the Buddha image has been challenged, and its Indian genesis established, by Dr. Coomaraswamy. The development of architecture is noticed mainly in its external elaborations; the aesthetic and highly symbolical aspect of certain types of temple architecture is more or less ignored. The writer has nothing particular to say about the exquisite figuration of Dhyani Buddha which so truly represents the Indian ideal in art; though he has developed a new thesis, highly suggestive, in "the *tribhanga*, the triple bend, which Indian art has given to its most beautiful figures all through its history." Like so many other forms of Indian art; the *tribhanga* has also spread outside and influenced the art of Central Asia, China, Japan, Tibet and Nepal. It becomes particularly interesting when the writer tries to discover its affinity to the characters in the famous contemporary dramas. Says the writer: " . . . In the *tribhanga*, pliancy and balance are united. The female figures at Ajanta, by their suppleness and nonchalant grace, seem to indicate self-surrender, voluptuous delight and languor; by their balance, which often looks like a backward movement, they appear to express a modesty which makes them as it were recoil upon themselves. This union of contraries, which seems to me to be characteristic of the greatest works of art, and which here consists of passion and self-surrender on the one hand and modesty on the other, struck me at my first sight of the genuine figures of Ajanta. For a moment I feared that my imagination was leading me astray, but literature afterwards confirmed my impression. 'My body', says Sakuntala, 'goes forward, and my mind, which is not at one with it, turns back.' This union in single character of balance and suppleness, which often leads to the attitude of the *tribhanga*, does not only express fleshy love, even in its refined form. We find it in flying and prostrate figures, and again in the great

bodhisattvas of cave I at Ajanta in which the breadth and balance of volumes and the very broad treatment of light and dark is combined with the bending effect of the *tribhanga*, and the serene expression of the faces seems to be mingled with one of melancholy and profound tenderness. What is united modesty and fire in the amorous woman seems to become in the *bodhisattvas* complete detachment from the outer world and concentration inwards in the equilibrium and serenity of meditation, intimately mingled with infinite compassion, tenderness, and love for all suffering creatures."

Well-chosen plates illustrating some typical examples of Indian art are an embellishment to the book.

On the whole, the book leaves us with a feeling of grateful admiration for the learned authors who have reconstructed India's past with such sympathy and understanding. The India that is made to live in these pages is an India that has ever been struggling to express her genius in ways that might not always have been beautiful but were always stupendous.

Shishir Mitra

### The Spirit of the Chinese Revolution.

By Arthur N. Holcombe.

Published by Arnold A. Knopf Ltd., London. 7/6.

The book consists of six chapters embodying lectures delivered early in 1930 at Boston under the auspices of the Lowell Institute. The author who is a Professor of Government at Harvard University never had the good fortune to meet Dr. Sun Yat-Sen but he has personally known almost all the other leaders of Revolutionary China whom he discusses in course of his lectures. The six chapters of the book deal successively with the spirit of six great forces which have tried to mould the Chinese Revolution, viz. Democracy, Bolshevism, Christianity, Militarism, Capitalism, and Science; and are associated with the names of Sun Yat-Sen, Borodin, Fung Yu-hsiang, Chiang Kai-shek, T. V. Soong, and C. T. Wang. The chapter on Science, however, though nominally associated with the name of C. T. Wang, deals almost exclusively with the constructive aspects of Sun Yat-Sen's Theory of Revolution and to some may appear far the most important and interesting portion of the book. Certain it is that in no other



book on China written by a foreigner is Dr. Sun's brilliant theory of government dealt with such admirable discernment, sympathy and thoroughness. Dr. Sun's political theory is not merely of intense theoretical interest to the student of political science but is a great and living force in the world of practical politics; in as much as the dictatorship of the Kuomintang is officially wedded to it. Mr. Holcombe observes: " . . . his general system of political thought compares favourably with that of other great revolutionary leaders of modern times. Indeed it may be doubted whether any great revolutionary movement has been provided with a more serviceable political philosophy. The possession of such a political philosophy is a source of enduring strength to the Chinese revolutionary movement and to the political system which that movement has created. It gives the dictatorship of the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, a better prospect of stability than that of any other form of dictatorship that has been suggested for China." Mr. Holcombe's observations lead one to think that Dr. Sun's theory has become as great a practical force in China as Marxism in Soviet Russia.

Sun Yat-Sen's theory of revolution distinguishes between three stages in the onward march of China: first, capture of power by a revolutionary party; secondly, economic reconstruction and civic and political education under the dictatorship of the party; and, thirdly, establishment of constitutional government or democracy when the people's training for it is completed. According to Mr. Holcombe the first stage has been successfully negotiated, the second is in progress and the prospects of the third being reached are far from being gloomy. Chiang Kai-shek is of course a militarist but he is not quite the sort of militarist that the world has come to associate with the name of China. The dictatorship of the Kuomintang is, as the author interprets it, a stage of reconstruction and education, with a view to the future establishment of democracy combined with plenty. Attempts to establish democratic or, to be precise, parliamentary forms of government in China have been premature and have failed. Bolshevism has failed too not only because it is against the spirit of Confucianism and its milieu, patriarchal society, but also because it lacks the objective conditions of industrial development which only can give birth to a proletarian party of the needed strength. Militarism of the old type has failed too and the progressively weaker series of China's internal

men" have failed to bring solace and contentment into the hearts of foreign merchants at the treaty ports and legation headquarters. The hope of China therefore lies in looking forward to democracy which will be established at some distant date through the development of capitalism and the application of science—political science more than natural science—under the dictatorship of the Nationalist Party. Such in brief is the skeleton that holds together Mr. Holcombe's lectures.

The author is perfectly aware of the difficulties that lie in the way of the development of capitalism in China. But we note with regret that he has given undue attention to the difficulty of securing foreign credit owing to unsettled political conditions and has neglected the all-important question whether the industrial development of China is possible at all under conditions of capitalism which is essentially a world system, and which in its present stage of development necessarily takes the form of imperialism. The record of the Chiang Kai-shek administration does not hold out great hope that the tempo of industrial development in China will be increased to any appreciable extent under capitalist rule. It is thus doubtful how far the dictatorship of the Kuomintang is calculated to realise Dr. Sun's dream of perfect democracy.

The question of the proper attitude of a proletarian party to the national movement is a living one in India and those who are interested in it will doubtless find the second chapter of the book of absorbing interest. Mr. Holcombe's account scarcely encourages the belief that socialists and nationalists can go very far in the same boat. Mr. Holcombe is frankly a believer in capitalism and a sympathetic friend of the activities of Christian missions. Yet throughout the book he has tried to maintain a historico-objective outlook and has noted with care the positive contributions of the Communists to the Chinese national movement.

The book is written with the raciness and lucidity so characteristic of American writers. As a sane and serious study of the problem of China it will take a lot of beating.

A. P. Mitra

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- (6) Translation of Bhagwat Gita in Urdu—By Hafiz Muhammad Salim, Burkki Press, Aliahabad.**
- (7) Intelligent man's guide to Indian Philosophy—By Manubhai Pandya (Taraporevala & Sons Co. Bombay).**
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